

INVESTIGATING PASTORAL CARE IN THE TAIWANESE AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

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By

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This dissertation seeks to understand the pastoral care needs of Taiwanese American Presbyterians, using the event of a funeral as an example. This dissertation is an ethnographic study of two congregations in the Southern California area. I use qualitative research interviews and participant observation to collect, sort, and interpret the data to investigate how people felt during their loss, what happened around the funeral, and how they experienced pastoral care. I also look at the history of Taiwan, Taiwanese churches, Taiwanese immigration, and Taiwanese American Presbyterian churches to better understand who Taiwanese American Presbyterians are. Even while pastors and churches want to provide care for their members, it can sometimes be difficult to do so. Through my ethnographic research, I found that there were several barriers to care, including people's desire to save face and the strength of their faith, which encourages them to stand firmly in the promises of Christ for life after death and to belie their grief. To break through these barriers, pastors tap into their gifts, experience, and personhood to connect with people authentically, using their experience of the organizational culture of their churches to inform how they relate to the church and perform pastoral care, including gaining insight into their needs may be and how to collaborate with the lay leadership. These pastors intentionally build relationships that assure people of their non-judgmental presence and create trust.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Last June, my mother came to visit me in California a few days early before my brother and his whole family came to Southern California for vacation with their two children. Before she arrived, she asked me for my schedule and asked if I had time to visit with a member of her congregation whose husband had recently died. My father is a pastor in New York and had been the pastor for this couple for several years before they moved to Southern California. While my father is a pastor, my mother, like many wives of Taiwanese American pastors, helped with his ministry, especially with the women. She knew this woman, “Mary,”¹ very well. Mary and her husband had spent the majority of their time in the United States in New York and in my father’s church, but as they got older, one of their daughters, who lives in Southern California, encouraged them to move away from the cold New York winters and retire closer to her, to Taiwan, and to other Taiwanese, as many older Taiwanese Americans have chosen to do. Though they had left New York, they never lost touch and my mother wanted to offer some support to Mary, on behalf of herself, my father, and the church. We called Mary, who quickly agreed to have us over for a visit.

We arrived at Mary’s home on a Friday evening. Her home had an open floor plan and there was not a pan or a dish in sight; not one item looked out of place and all the surfaces sparkled; her home was impeccable. Mary spoke to us very calmly, sharing some factual details of her late husband’s illness and death. She talked about their life together and the things they were able to do with their family before he died, and about their life in California. There were times when she became teary, but she gently dabbed her eyes to wipe the tears away. At no time did she become very emotional or lose her composure. While she was recounting her loss, she also shared that she

¹ This name has been changed.

was struggling with California living after moving away from New York, leaving all their friends behind. Finding a new church home had been difficult for her and her husband. When he died, Mary did not feel that she had a strong relationship with the Taiwanese American church she had been attending, so she had her daughter and son-in-law take over all the arrangements. In that moment, I wondered if this was the first time she had sat down with someone from church to receive pastoral care. I also wondered what pastoral care for Mary would look like, especially if she did not feel connected to her current church. Had my mother not coincidentally been visiting California, who would Mary have talked to? While she has moved to California for a bit and does attend a Taiwanese American Presbyterian Church here, would she be willing to share with her new the church same kind of vulnerabilities about her relationships with her spouse and her family that she had shared with my mother? Would she be open to allowing them to come into her spotless home and be willing to shed tears with them? What might the church be able to offer in their support of her, when she feels so new and distant?

The central problem this dissertation investigates is the lack of research done on pastoral care in Taiwanese American immigrant churches, and whether there is good quality pastoral care being given and received. I hope, by doing my research, I can see more clearly what pastoral care looks like in the Taiwanese American church, what the challenges are, and how to overcome the barriers so that pastors and churches can offer pastoral care to a population who may not even realize it is something they need. To address this, I have chosen to research one common experience of pastoral care that happens to many individuals: the funeral. I hope that the funeral can provide insight allowing for assessment and improvement of pastoral care offered in Taiwanese American immigrant churches. Pastoral care has always been at the center of the Christian faith. There are many ways to understand and define pastoral care. Traditionally, pastoral care has been an integral part of the work of the Christian Church. At the center of pastoral care is an attempt to understand

our relationship to God and to find ways to serve the development of that relationship. While the population of Taiwanese Christians and even the number of Taiwanese American Christian is low in number, the Taiwanese American immigrant church may be one of the only places where they can find a community; a home away from home that can provide an extended network of support for Taiwanese Americans. Providing pastoral care for Taiwanese Americans in this context is an important concern.

Discussion of the Problem

This practical theological study uses ethnography to explore pastoral care in the Taiwanese American church through the lens of the funeral. The purpose of this ethnographic study is to investigate the funeral event as a way to understand and describe how pastors utilize this ritual to provide care, particularly for Taiwanese Americans in the Presbyterian Church. The time of the funeral typically presents difficulties in most lives and thus the commonplace experience of the funeral provides an opportunity to learn more about the pastoral care experienced by parishioners. Death and the grief it causes are experienced by almost everyone, and people might feel more freedom to engage with and share their feelings of sorrow with others, as opposed to sharing other, more personal and idiosyncratic struggles in their lives for which they also need support. Rituals, such as the funeral, provide comfort. In my project, I observed and investigated how the Taiwanese American culture shapes the funeral service, how the pastors help people through grief, and the challenges that the pastors encountered and had to overcome to provide care. I have reflected upon how pastoral caregivers are intentional about using the funeral as a way of providing care. In doing this project, I hope to better understand the needs of people, to observe how pastors approach pastoral care and, if possible, offer recommendations for additional strategies and methods of providing effective pastoral care.

I am interested in this topic because I am a Taiwanese American pastor and I understand how important the church is in the life of a Taiwanese American immigrant. While I am not a parish minister, I am a palliative care chaplain and I have witnessed how difficult death and dying is for families who need support at this time, though the specific needs will differ, depending on the deceased person and the family. As a practical theologian, it is important for me to better understand how people apply their faith to the experience of death. As I develop that understanding, I continue to reflect on what pastoral counseling is doing for people in that situation and then ask what further action can be taken. As I researched pastoral care in relation to Taiwanese Americans, I have found few existing resources in this field. There does not seem to be much research being done for and about Taiwanese Americans. Therefore, I have chosen to conduct research and add a Taiwanese American voice to the field. This project hopes to assist Taiwanese American pastors and congregations better understand the challenges of pastoral care in the Taiwanese American Presbyterian Churches so that they can provide more robust pastoral support for their members and, perhaps, become sensitive to the impact that pastoral care has on those who receive it.

Discussion of the Thesis

Pastoral care during the period of bereavement is an immutable responsibility of the Christian church, one of the few life situations that is universal, and is a time when people are more willing to reach out for assistance. Pastoral care is given during the funeral event itself and this can be a source of comfort for the bereaved. Since the funeral is a common and difficult experience, my thesis is that research into the experience of a funeral provides an opportunity for the assessment and improvement of pastoral care offered in Taiwanese American immigrant mainline churches. Taiwanese American immigrant Christians have unique pastoral care needs that require their pastors to be consistent and intentional about the care that they offer, tapping into their authentic,

vulnerable selves to establish a deep relationship with their church members and lay leaders built on trust and a non-judgmental presence. Additionally, it is crucial for pastoral leaders to understand the context of the church, especially its organizational culture and history, so that they can identify rules and traditions that may not be outwardly obvious.

These insights can provide the groundwork for pastors to become better integrated into the church and to be trusted by the congregation to perform the leadership functions, working more efficiently and closely with their lay leaders to provide effective pastoral care. My research encourages Christians, especially pastors, to look within themselves, locate their gifts and personhood as a way of building the relationship required to provide good pastoral care. Moreover, I hope this project can contribute to the body of work in pastoral care and practical theology to address the pastoral care of Taiwanese Americans and immigrants, by utilizing contextual pastoral care and taking into account unique cultural expectations and needs of Taiwanese Americans.

Review of Closely Related Literature

Pastoral care is a very broad topic that spans many different life situations and contexts and it is not done in a vacuum but is influenced and informed by many fields. There is substantial literature on pastoral care, contextual theology, and funerals, but there is less research done on an exclusively Taiwanese American Christian population. It can be a challenge for pastors to provide pastoral care to Taiwanese American Christians due to their culture and context, but this project hopes to offer recommendations of what to do by building on the foundation of the relevant work that has already been done.

Method and Methodology

This project uses ethnography that explores pastoral care in the Taiwanese American church through the lens of the funeral. The purpose of this ethnographic study is to investigate the funeral event to understand and describe how the church and its leaders provide care. I lean heavily on Mary Clark Moschella's *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice: An Introduction* as the method for my research. Moschella's book provides an in-depth description of what an ethnography is and how to do it properly. Using ethnography, I was able to understand the context of Taiwanese American immigrant churches. I spent several Sundays observing the congregations I studied, attending the Sunday service, meeting their members, talking to their leaders, eating lunch during fellowship, and observing their customs and practices, as well as having in-depth conversations with the pastor and one member of the congregation who had lost a family member. I was able to set up times for my interviews separate from the Sunday events at the churches.

Combined with Elaine Graham, Heather Walton and Frances Ward's *Theological Reflection: Methods*, I provide a framework for my research and project. Graham, Walton, and Ward provide an argument for the importance of listening to and for the voices that are marginalized. For them, practical theological method has to be inclusive of the stories of those whose voices have not been heard, because they bring to us a broader understanding of God. What we are doing in research is to listen to and lift up the stories that we hear and weave them together with God's story. Finally, I followed Richard Osmer's format as outlined in his *Practical Theology: An Introduction*. He describes and uses four tasks of practical theology: the descriptive-empirical task, the interpretative task, the normative task, and the pragmatic task, all of which together "constitute the basic structure of practical theological interpretation."² These tasks are helpful in presenting results from practical theological studies to approach the ministerial experiences we encounter to gain more insight into

² Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 4.

these situations so that we can improve our ministry. I apply his four tasks of practical theology in my research, utilizing each task as a chapter in this work. The work of all three pastoral theologians serve as the theoretical framework for my research and what I used to collect, analyze, and present my data and the interpretation of this data.

History of Taiwan, the Church, and Taiwanese American Christians and Their Churches

Further, I consulted literature on the history of Taiwan, history of Christianity in Taiwan and in the United States, and Taiwanese theology. I looked at the literature on funerals, including the important aspects of funeral services such as the liturgy and the care that happens during the ritual itself. Lastly, I reviewed works on culture, especially in the field of organizational culture. Using these resources and the data gathered from my research, I hope to outline how pastoral care, by understanding the context and culture, can address personal and communal wounds that Taiwanese American Christians have experienced. Hopefully, my work can contribute to a better understanding of Taiwanese American Christian churches and their members and leaders, and lead to more mutual support among all. I have gained insight into pastoral care for Taiwanese Americans and better understand how the pastors use the funeral service itself as an additional way to provide pastoral care, through carefully crafting each part of the funeral process to be meaningful to the bereaved and to honor the deceased. This may contribute to a better understanding of funerals as pastoral care for other groups and contexts as well.

Taiwanese American immigrants have gone through their own challenges historically and struggled with forming an identity and searching for freedom. Part of any immigration journey is to leave families behind and move to a new, foreign place, as reviewed below, but Taiwanese Christians have experienced an estrangement from their homeland prior to leaving it due to colonialization and their western faith. Sociologists of religion have written about adaptive theory, where they

understand the immigrant church to serve several sociological functions, including replacing family, maintaining culture, establishing a network, building a community, as well as being a house of worship. Carolyn Chen, a sociologist of religion who, in *Getting Saved in America: Taiwanese Immigration and Religious Experience*, studies the role of religion in both Christianity and Buddhism, among Taiwanese American immigrants. She found these functions in the Taiwanese American church as well. She affirmed that there were other sociological functions in the Taiwanese American church beyond merely serving as a place of worship. She found that there were additional functions of the Taiwanese American immigrant churches which added to the relationship of the members with each other and this, in turn, affects how Taiwanese understand, utilize, and depend on the church community. Her research adds more insight into the church as a community of individual Taiwanese, even if it is not focused on grief, loss, or funerals.

My research is not simply about people who have immigrated to the United States from Taiwan, it is also about looking at a particular Taiwanese population who self-identify ethnically as only Taiwanese, rather than identify as either Taiwanese and Chinese, Chinese, and whose families lived in Taiwan before the Chinese occupation. Further, as these Taiwanese American Christians are also connected to the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT), the oldest Christian denomination in Taiwan, there is a higher percentage of Christian families, such as the people I interviewed. The result is that I do not address traditions of Taiwanese funeral practices, such as ancestor veneration or traditional understanding of bad luck associated with death. I will address this history further in chapter two. By not establishing the cultural difference between those who self-identify as Taiwanese and Chinese immigrants to Taiwan who immigrated to the United States afterwards, Chen missed some nuances of the effect of Chinese colonialism in Taiwan and the search for identity that is rooted in the Taiwanese. In her book, she made a claim that the Taiwanese belong to mostly non-denominational churches, but the PCT is the oldest indigenous denomination in Taiwan

and is the denomination of most of the Taiwanese American immigrant churches that I am studying. I looked at Allen Swanson's research, *Mending the Nets: Taiwan Church Growth and Loss in the 1980's* for a discussion of the different denominations of Churches in Taiwan and their population to further clarify this distinction. This book sheds further light on the kinds of Taiwanese churches that existed in Taiwan. The influence of the PCT on the early Taiwanese immigrants ultimately led them to seek alignment with reformed denominations in the United States who had sent missionaries to Taiwan to evangelize and establish the PCT, such as the Presbyterian church USA (PCUSA) and Reformed Church in America (RCA). These are the denominations of the majority of Taiwanese American Churches with denominational affiliation.

It is important to get a more nuanced understanding of Taiwanese history to understand the context under which a majority of these early Taiwanese immigrants arrived in the United States. The Reverend Lee Cheng-Lung wrote a very detailed history of Taiwan called *History of Taiwan*, in four volumes.³ This includes not only the influence and impact of missionaries to Taiwan but covers the time of the very first colonialization of Taiwan by the Dutch and Spanish colonialization. His tome helps establish how the impact of being a colonialized people has affected Taiwanese contexts, which leads to Po Ho Huang's Taiwanese contextual theology, which he explored in *From Galilee to Tainan: Toward a Theology of Chhut-thau-thi'*. Huang describes a post-colonial, contextual Taiwanese theology that focuses on a search for Taiwanese identity that was developed out of a violent colonization experience. Huang finds Taiwanese history crucial to developing this theology, which has accompanied Taiwanese American immigrants to the United States, because it is impossible to leave trauma behind. With their experience of colonialism which denied Taiwanese their autonomy and identity and it follows their journey into a foreign land to start a new life, their search for

³ The author is 李政隆 and the book is titled 台灣史 and is written in Mandarin.

personhood and belonging which continues to be a part of the struggle for Taiwanese Americans. *Chhut-thau-thi*⁴ is a theology born out of feeling alien in your own home and trying to find identity and liberation, which Taiwanese American Christians are continuing to do in their new home. I will address this connection further in chapter two. By understanding Taiwanese people better with their search for their collective and individual identities and how that impacts their daily lives, I can better understand the needs of the Taiwanese for pastoral care during the time of grief. These scholars give a comprehensive explanation of the history of Taiwanese and Taiwanese Americans, to better describe the political, social, and religious background from which Taiwanese immigrants, or refugees, arrived in the United States, how this history and experience impacts their lives and behavior, and how the Taiwanese American church was established. I will talk more about Taiwanese history and the influence of that history on theology later in the next chapter.

The PCT plays an influential role in the Taiwanese American immigrant churches that Chen does not address. Yoshihisa Amae's dissertation *Taiwan's Exodus: The Presbyterian Church in Taiwanese Nationalism, 1945-1992* brings a helpful analysis of how the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT) functioned politically and the difference between the Taiwanese benshenren⁴ and the Mainland waishenren.⁵ The PCT's political activism has impacted the Taiwanese-speaking Taiwanese churches in the United States, making it distinct from Mandarin-speaking churches. Furthermore, in his "*The Development of North American Taiwanese Christian Church*,"⁶ Huang Wu Dong describes the history of Taiwanese American immigrants to the United States and how the churches in the United States were established. He clarifies the history of Taiwanese American churches in the United States, providing a better understanding of the culture within Taiwanese American churches. This is a helpful text that draws on the history of Taiwan and the role of churches in Taiwan's political

⁴ Mandarin, meaning people of this province.

⁵ Mandarin, meaning people of an outside province.

⁶ Original title: 北美洲台灣基督教會開拓 by 黃武東

history and how that impacts Taiwanese American Churches. All of these texts contribute to a better understanding of the culture of Taiwanese American churches and I argue that it is important for leaders, especially pastors, to understand the culture of the church to give effective pastoral care.

This understanding of history and Taiwanese Americans contributes to understanding Taiwanese immigrants better, which can lead to better pastoral care. This project expands the research into the nuances of Taiwanese American reformed Christian community and how this group of immigrant Christians understands and receives pastoral care and support. This community is of interest to me because this is my own community. My great-grandmother's life was changed by a missionary to Taiwan; she was converted to Christianity with her family. Both her brother and her son became pastors in the PCT. Today, my father is a pastor in a Taiwanese American church in the Reformed Church in America. While I am not serving in a Taiwanese American congregation, I do attend a Taiwanese American Presbyterian Church and often participate in events aimed for pastors in the community and I often hear of the challenges faced by pastors and congregations.

This project helped me see the importance of faith in people's lives and their dependence on God, rather than on other people. All those I interviewed kept their focus on God and it is this relationship that supports the grieving through difficult times, and it is the reason that the caregivers do what they do. Because people see themselves dependent on God rather than other human beings, there is little expectation for support, either emotional or practical. It is up to the motivated pastors to intentionally build relationships with people to give the congregation what they do not know they need and to support them in authentic ways they did not expect. James Lin's 1997 dissertation *Pastoral Counseling Taiwanese Immigrants in the Church Setting: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* adds to the understanding of care in a Taiwanese American context. He notes that pastoral counseling has not always been important, but is growing in importance, as people feel more comfortable approaching their pastors for help over other professionals. Though focused on pastoral counseling, it provides

support for reflecting on religiously-oriented care offered to and experienced by Taiwanese American Christians, especially emphasizing that the “cultural characteristics of the Taiwanese need to be understood, respected, and utilized.”⁷ Building on his insights, and adding information about saving face and other barriers to care relationships, this project can produce real evidence for pastors in ministry who need more information about how to provide pastoral care, as well as for the church community to be more encouraged about how they are caring for their members.

Funerals

Most of the literature on the funeral has to do with the meaning of funerals and the organization of the service, making arguments about what is theological about funeral rituals and how personalization might be a way to extend pastoral care to the bereaved. This literature is done through a western lens, and the authors assume that their readers share that location and worldview. There is no discussion about different cultures or even religions that might be influential in the context of people. Taiwanese, as C.S. Song points out, belong to a society that includes a diversity of religious beliefs and cultures, as Asia comprises of more than half of the world’s population.⁸ The way that Taiwanese and Taiwanese Americans engage Christianity cannot be the same as Christians who live within a monotheistic Christian culture. Song encourages Taiwanese and others who live in a polytheistic culture to take our non-Christian and non-Western stories seriously as a way to do theology. This is a way of acknowledging the importance of one’s experience and life and honoring their unique stories. By reclaiming our stories, we reclaim ourselves and allow the stories to “lead us to deeper truths about humanity and God.”⁹ Each culture has its unique perspective and context. It

⁷ James Chia-Cheng Lin, “Pastoral Counseling Taiwanese Immigrants in the Church Setting: A Cross-Cultural Perspective” (D. Min diss., School of Theology at Claremont, 1997), 2.

⁸ C.S Song, *Third-Eye Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1979), 5.

⁹ Song, 11.

is important to look at people as they are and not as how they might fit into a predetermined western context, thus embracing the fullness of the people of God.

Taiwanese culture and traditions are crucial aspects of pastoral care to Taiwanese Americans but the literature on pastoral care during funerals is not necessarily inclusive of the diversity that exists in 21st century United States. Traditional literature on pastoral care and theology has always been western-centered, but we who are not centered in the west need ways to find ourselves in our faith that honors rather than turns us away from who we are. It seems that churches have traditionally imposed a ritual on grieving families, but that is starting to shift as people desire and demand more personalized services that are meaningful. This push has driven theologians to reflect on what the purpose for the funeral should be. In the literature, there is also a lot of instruction for planning a funeral and the pastoral care that should go along with a funeral and time of grief. What I will be focusing on is the funeral itself being a part of pastoral care through the honoring of people's lives and stories, and on the pastors being able to establish a connection between the divine and the deceased.

There are a wealth of academic materials that discuss the importance of funerals and how to be intentional about using this ritual to provide care. *Caring Through the Funeral: A Pastor's Guide* by Gene Fowler speaks to caring for the grieving through the funeral process based on real ministry experience. Fowler looks at funerals through the eyes of pastoral care, which is what I am doing, and he acknowledges the importance of the community, not only the pastor, when discussing the giving of care. He is also specific about the different kinds of contexts in which funerals take place with ministry playing different roles and how those differences might impact the pastoral care relationship of a minister with the family. By defining the terms of the ministry and church, he is able to define what pastoral care looks like in funerals. He does not, however, focus on the specific cultural, racial, ethnic, and social differences in funerals. I address some of these specifics in my own

research. Fowler uses a systems theory that emphasizes the importance of relationships, including insights from psychology that can add richness to the care of the bereaved. He does acknowledge that his book stops shortly after the funeral is conducted, which limits his understanding of ongoing pastoral care. As my research will take place after the funeral, I add insight into a longer-term relationship the pastor and the church will have with bereaved families and how they perceived the funeral as they move further away from the event itself.

The time of the funeral typically presents some difficulties in most lives and thus the commonplace experience of the funeral provides an opportunity to learn more about the pastoral care experienced by parishioners. I observe and investigate how the Taiwanese American culture shapes the funeral service and helps people through grief. The ritual nature of the funeral and the memories shared can provide comfort and it is important to understand how this works so that pastoral caregivers can be intentional about using the funeral as a way of providing care. In *Accompany them with Singing: The Christian Funeral*, Thomas Long delves deeper into the funeral as a ritual and why that is important for the bereaved. He names the importance of a funeral being able to “console the grief-stricken, remember and honor the deceased, display community care, and give thanks for all the joys and graces experienced in the life of the one who has died.”¹⁰ Yet, the funeral is a more than that: it is important to remember that Christian rituals are not merely about people, but about God and our faith as well. While Long is able to trace the significance of a ritual and what it can do to help mourners, he presents this information from a very western framework, which I can add to with a Taiwanese cultural perspective. This means being able to navigate what is an honoring of Taiwanese culture during the funeral service and how to negotiate with the Christian theology of a traditional ritual to create a meaningful funeral for families.

¹⁰ Thomas G. Long, *Accompany them with Singing: The Christian Funeral* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 78.

Some scholars have dealt with the role of the church and the ritual of funerals as a way to deal with loss and healing. The book *All Our Losses, All Our Grievs* describes the funeral as a ritual of ending and is a public ministry to those who grieve and is a form of pastoral care. Kenneth R. Mitchell and Herbert Anderson emphasize that the funeral is a part of the grieving process where people can remember and find closure. They encourage reflection on the funeral and being mindful of what is hidden and the role of the church and liturgy as a part of the process. These insights can be a way to understand the experience of mourning. The way they describe the funeral helps me place this ritual within the culture of the church and within the families.

Additionally, funerals must include stories. By hearing their stories, we can provide what Tony Walter calls life-centered funerals. In his article “Judgement, Myth and Hope in Life-Centred Funerals,” he encourages Christian pastors to look to secular funerals that offer a similar “life-centred” that focuses on the deceased and their lives. In his research, Walter finds that the secular service is preferred over the religious one because of the rigidity of the religious rituals that does not allow for individuation. While he is not advocating that Christian funerals forgo the religious aspects of the funeral rite, he believes that pastors can apply some change in order to motivate mourners to return to the church for funeral services. His takeaway is that theologians must engage critically with modern practices in order to fully serve our mourners and honor the dead. His observation is significant, because he has noted that the church is using this strategy as a method to bring “business” back to the church. The caution here is that we cannot stray too far from our theological roots and our flexibility cannot come at the expense of our theology and our faith. However, there is a real need to individualize the funeral as it pertains to each person. Both pastors I interviewed view this as a part of their obligation to care for the deceased. They recognize that each person has a life story that requires some personalization in order to fully honor that person.

The Right Reverend Michael Ipgrave locates people not only as individuals and members of their own families, but “also as members of wider communities”¹¹ and acknowledges that different communities have different cultures that need to be considered. He has found that people have organically been incorporating cultural norms into the way funerals are done, though he can see the challenge this poses to the Church, as “Christians of different backgrounds want to respect and support their fellow church members in their death as they did in their life, but expectations around funerals can be so different that they can sometimes become occasions of separation rather than of solidarity.”¹² It seems to me that while Ipgrave may be open to infusing some cultural practices into an English funeral, for Ipgrave, having too many different kinds of expectations around the funeral can become overwhelming. Because he stands in the midst of the English Anglican tradition where he believes the funerals should be centered, it can be difficult to incorporate everything wanted in an Anglican service. That he comes to this conclusion could be because as a white, English man, what he sees as diversity and culture differences are separate from the “English” way of life. What is divisive to him could be affirming rather than isolating to the deceased and their families as they are able to celebrate and remember their loved ones in a way that is meaningful to them.

Stories

A lot of scholarship discusses the importance of storytelling in theology. A story-centered approach is central to my study, as I agree with the assessment that stories are central to our lives and the narratives that we tell ourselves shape who we are and determine [8](#) who we want to be. For Karen Scheib, narrative pastoral care is exactly this. In her book *Pastoral Care: Telling the Stories of Our*

¹¹ Michael Ipgrave, “Christian Funerals,” in *Death, Resurrection, and Human Destiny: Christian and Muslim Perspectives*, ed. David Marshall and Lucinda Mosher (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2014), 223

¹² Ipgrave, 224.

Lives, Scheib says that stories function to “give meaning and shape to what might otherwise seem like random, unconnected events.”¹³ It is through stories that we can find encouragement, hope, and healing. Narrative pastoral care is also “a theological practice” where we can understand the “larger role of theology in pastoral practice.”¹⁴ Further, an awareness of one’s theological perspective allows us to better understand how our beliefs and convictions are embodied in our practices. This kind of care is an intentional commitment to those about whom the pastors care and the kind of care that caregivers should offer.

This telling of the story can be additionally helpful in the context of narrative therapy in which people reframe how they see their lives and themselves. In narrative counseling, people are regarded as social beings who define themselves and make sense of their lives through the stories they tell. Stories clarify “what people want, what they like about themselves, and even what they want to change.”¹⁵ The goal of narrative therapy is to be able to reflect on the way a person thinks and copes with what is happening in their lives, using stories to define themselves. Stories also explain how particular experiences have led to them to become who they turned out to be. Moreover, one’s story is not just about personhood and how people see themselves in the stories they tell; storytelling is an aspect of culture that helps shape and maintain culture. In this case, this has to do with how those I interviewed relate with one another in the churches. In all these ways, people’s stories are essential to their personhood, and they can be used for pastoral care. Throughout the process of my interviews, I heard and honored the stories of both the bereaved and the pastors. Their stories are the narratives of their lives and of God’s faithfulness and promises. A

¹³ Karen D. Scheib, *Pastoral Care: Telling the Stories of Our lives* ((Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2016), 7.

¹⁴ Scheib, 5.

¹⁵ Duane A. Halbur and Kimberly Vess Halbur, *Developing your Theoretical Orientation in Counseling and Psychotherapy* (Boston: Pearson Education, Inc, 2006), 75.

large part of chapter three involves the stories that were told to me and how their stories offer insight into their lives and how they see themselves fitting into God's story.

Specifically, Herbert Anderson and Edward Foley in their *Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals: Weaving Together the Human and the Divine* apply these stories to funerals and to death and dying. For Anderson and Foley, the story that is told by the bereaved is a biography that tells someone's story from the outside in, which are the stories I am listening to during my interviews. Additionally, it is important to look at the ritual that takes place, which in itself "tells the kind of story that becomes a life-affirming memory."¹⁶ These memories and stories bring up emotions. The funeral ritual is a time to share stories of the deceased and the divine, but the storytelling needs to continue even after the funeral. Human beings need both narrative and ritual to "create environments conducive to their psychological, social, and spiritual survival and development."¹⁷ Thus, it will be helpful to create new rituals that are based and built on traditional rituals.

Stories are essential to human beings and understanding people's stories is a way we can better understand them and their sense of who they are. Lee Franklin's *A Pastor's Practical Guide to Funerals: Offering Help, Assurance, and Hope* starts with a story-centered approach to pastoral care and to funerals. He journeys through the entire process of death and dying, including different contexts of deaths that may occur and how to reflect on and provide pastoral care. The book begins with the preparation for death and ends with pastoral care for the bereaved after the funeral. He emphasizes the importance of pastoral care given by the congregation in addition to the pastor, encouraging the creation of a new life for the bereaved, reminding us that stories give meaning to our lives. By listening and honoring stories, we bring care to the storyteller and offer honor and respect to their experience and their life. The funeral should not only be a ritual, but a time and place to share the

¹⁶ Herbert Anderson and Edward Foley, *Mighty Stories, Dangerous Ritual: Weaving Together the Human and the Divine* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass: 1998), 99.

¹⁷ Anderson and Foley, 128.

stories of the deceased and how that plays into the story of God and our faith. While this book does not include cultural aspects, per se, it can be a good foundation to reflect on what is needed during this difficult time. However, this is a good approach to understanding how pastors provide pastoral care with their members and how they honor their deceased members.

Organizational Culture

Finally, it is important to consider literature on organizational culture, even though this has been mainly focused on corporations rather than churches. Organizational culture shines a light on how culture functions in an organization, including how to identify different aspects of culture and how leadership should function within the culture and the organization. Edgar Schein's *Organizational Culture and Leadership* provides an overview of how to understand organizational culture, which I use to tie together the history of the church with its present. This work also provides a backdrop to how I see pastors function within their different churches. Terrence Deal and Allan Kennedy's *Corporate Culture: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life* adds an additional dimension of rituals and storytelling in the life of an organization, which is important for an understanding of pastoral care and funerals. As the funeral is the ritual that I am specifically studying, Deal and Kennedy were helpful in identifying how rituals and storytelling relate to the overall organization. In chapter four, I dive further into the church's organizational culture and how that relates to the way pastoral care is performed.

These closely related selections from the body of literature, as they relate to effective pastoral care, helped to inform my interpretation of the stories that I heard in my interviews, because each deepened my insight into the lives and faith of Taiwanese American Christians and their churches. As I consult these resources, I find that the stories build on each other; together they help me better understand and interpret my data, enabling me to find the challenges and needs of my community

when it comes to pastoral care. Researching the history, I am able to trace how pastoral care and the church developed in Taiwan and the impact that has on Taiwanese American immigrants. This influences the culture of the churches that the pastoral caregivers need to take into consideration. The challenges that pastoral caregivers face does not come out of a vacuum, and to break through these barriers, pastoral caregivers need to establish a caring relationship. I point out insights from various fields that can work together to contribute positively to Taiwanese American Christian pastoral care so that people's needs can be addressed and, in the process, these insights assist pastors to gain a better understanding of immigrant and ethnic churches in the United States.

Seeking Taiwanese American Presbyterian Churches and Families

Building on the work done by sociologists of religion, it is clear that immigrant churches are not just houses of worship for the faithful to gather together for the sake of their spiritual lives. The question of what pastoral care is becomes central to the life of the church and its people: if the immigrant church is a place for social and practical support, a community where strangers become family, what does pastoral care look like, who provides it, and what are the needs in the Taiwanese American Churches? The Southern California region is an ideal location for my research study as it contains the greatest number of Taiwanese American immigrants in the United States. For this study, I recruited two Taiwanese American Presbyterian Churches in the greater Los Angeles area to observe how the churches provide pastoral care for their members and how the pastors at both churches and one member from each church feel about pastoral care. While Taiwanese American churches are not all the same, I attempt to offer insight into the unique needs of this community so that pastors and lay leaders can provide better care.

I began my research based on the records collected by Reverend Mei-Hui Lai, the associate for Asian Congregational Support in the Presbyterian Church, USA (PCUSA). According to her

records, there are 14 Taiwanese American Presbyterian churches in this region and several fellowships that have not yet become churches. Rev. Lai's record also includes the churches' addresses and contact information for the pastor of each church, which I used to contact the churches for my study. I attended their services multiple times, made observations at each church, and participated in the fellowship luncheon afterwards, where I was able to speak to members of the congregation. From each congregation, I interviewed the pastor and one person who had lost someone. In both cases, the individuals had lost their spouse. Further, during the time that I was conducting my study, both churches suffered the loss of an elderly member. I was unable to attend the funeral services, because they were private affairs. However, I was able to attend a memorial service that was open to the congregation, after receiving permission from the pastor. Because these deaths occurred during the time of my research study, I was able to speak to both pastors about the funerals and the circumstances around the deaths, the planning, and how the pastors conducted pastoral care while they were actively working with the families. I offer a description of the churches, the interviewees, and the pastors in chapter three, as well as of my method and methodology. I offer my interpretation of this data in chapter four.

Organization of the Dissertation

In this introduction, chapter 1, I have laid out my research question, explained the structure of my study, and reviewed relevant literature. I share why this subject matter is relevant to me and what I hope to address and learn through this project and to share the relevant disciplines and fields that inform my interpretation of the data. I also give an overview of my research methodology and method, as well as my interpretation, which I will go into in greater detail in later chapters. I have offered summaries of the chapters. I will now outline the rest of the dissertation.

Chapter two includes important historical information about Taiwan and Taiwanese Americans, their churches, and pastoral care. I share the story of the colonization of Taiwan and how that has impacted immigration and the history of Christianity in Taiwan. I address the identity of Taiwanese in more detail in chapter two, as, in my opinion, this is a crucial distinction. I discuss how Christian missionaries have supported the Taiwanese through their work in the church and how the church was organized in Taiwan has influenced the establishment of Taiwanese American Presbyterian Churches (TPC) in the United States; in particular I point out the difference between Taiwanese American Presbyterian Churches (PCUSA) and the non-denominational churches that Chen studies in her book. I tell the story of Taiwanese Americans, going back into Taiwanese history in Taiwan, Taiwanese American history, and Christian history. I trace the impact of these histories on their lives, their church and the culture of the Taiwanese Presbyterian Church in the United States. I help readers understand what work has already been done in the fields of Taiwanese theology and pastoral care of funerals, and congregational study and pastoral care on bereavement, and discuss the importance of intercultural theology.

In chapter three, I open the conversation on my method and methodology in practical theology. I discuss the empirical component of my research: ethnographic study and how that relates to practical theology. This chapter is where I describe my process, including how I found the churches I interviewed, the parameters of my research, and the problems that I encountered while doing this project. In the problems, I discuss what I learned about the TPC and Taiwanese American Christians. I describe and define the terms of my study; how I conducted the interviews, my observations, and other research activities. I also introduce the churches I visited to conduct my research as well as the individuals I interviewed in those churches. I share my experience as a participant observer in these churches and the conversations I have had with the people in the

church, as well as my experience of attending a funeral. This is the chapter where the stories of the churches and of the people are told.

Chapter four is where I present the result of my interviews in greater detail, along with my interpretation of the material. In my research, I found that pastoral care is about the relationship that people have with their pastor, with the church, and with each other, including some barriers to providing good pastoral care, how the pastors are able to break through, and how the culture of the church impacts its members. This is the chapter where I address my findings around the funeral. In this chapter, I dialogue with the literature that exists as I reflect on the stories that I have heard. I attempt to place the data into the context of the lives of Taiwanese American Christians, using a variety of fields. I look at the work of the pastors to see how they fit into the theories that are presented and how the people can benefit from those theories in practice. In this chapter, I reflect on the literature and theories to see how the pastors and the bereaved lives are shaped by these theories which helped me to understand their vision of Taiwanese American pastoral care.

The final chapter has insights and revised practices for practical theology and for pastoral theology and care issues that arise. I engage the data to provide pastors or the church with an increasingly effective way to provide pastoral care for the bereaved, especially in Taiwanese contexts. I look at the role of the pastor and the way pastors engage the action-reflection-action model of practical theology. I find that it is their ability to build relationships that allows people to receive the pastoral care that is given to them. This emphasizes the importance of pastoral awareness of the culture of the church as they work to expand pastoral care into how the church as a whole sees their role in providing care. Additionally, I look at different images of pastoral care to describe the way they offer pastoral care and how the two pastors utilized the idea of servant leadership both to build relationships with their members and to offer support, fitting these images and their strategies for servant leadership within the organizational culture of the churches they serve.

In the end, there are a lot of challenges that come with providing pastoral care to Taiwanese American immigrants. It is not enough to simply be open to providing care or to be in the leadership position. Care comes from a deep trust that does not come from a title or a leadership role. Instead, it comes from an authentic connection created with a deliberate effort to build the relationship that allows for people to trust their pastor with their deepest, darkest secrets. There are a lot of struggles that people go through on their own that they do not want to share with others, for whatever reason. The only way to get through that wall cannot be found in theories and texts; but instead in the actual, practical theological work in which pastoral caregivers must intentionally engage. Further, it is important for pastors to understand the culture of the churches that they lead and engage the church appropriately. This will not only help them fit in and allow them to be successful pastoral leaders, but it will also encourage the church to become a source of pastoral care for their members.

Chapter Two

Taiwan: Past and Present

The United States has been a place of refuge for many people around the world and there is a constant influx arriving to live their dreams of freedom and peace. Taiwanese people have not always found safety on our own “beautiful island.” Instead, there has been a long history of colonialism and oppression, leading to a loss of identity and freedom. In the United States, Taiwanese Americans have been able to lead relatively stable lives, as highly educated professionals.¹⁸ To understand the context of Taiwanese American Christians and Taiwanese American immigrant churches, it is essential to look at its history, in both Taiwan and the United States. What the Taiwanese have experienced and endured affects their behavior, expectations, and how they engage with those around them, both in the church and outside of it. Likewise, the history of pastoral care highlights how the reformed tradition has influenced Taiwanese American pastoral care. This chapter will briefly describe the histories of Taiwan, of Christianity in Taiwan, of Taiwanese American Christianity, and of pastoral care so that there can be more in-depth discussion of their implications in later chapters as I engage and interpret my data.

History of Taiwan

An important and relevant aspect of Taiwanese history is its Chinese colonization after the Japanese occupation ended in 1945. The Taiwanese had been unable to have self-determination and freedom because of the colonial occupation that started with the Dutch and Spanish and continued on to the Chinese, then the Japanese, and finally once again the Chinese. Taiwanese have longed to find freedom from oppression, to find their own identity and their own voice. When Taiwanese,

¹⁸ Carolyn Chen, *Getting Saved in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 19-20.

who were either forced to leave or voluntarily left Taiwan for the United States, they had to adjust to the new culture and world into which they moved. This inability of the inhabitants of Ilha Formosa to have established their own nation and to achieve self-determination and self-identity impacted Taiwanese Americans, which was compounded by their relocation into a new culture. These facts impact pastoral care and they require understanding.

Taiwanese history is complicated because of the different regimes that ruled the island. Before the 1600s, Taiwan was first settled by Malay-Polynesians, who are now considered the aboriginal people of Taiwan. Sporadic immigrations from China to Taiwan took place between that time and the 1600s. In the 1600s, European powers of the Dutch, Spanish, and Portuguese traveled around the world, claiming territories for their countries. When the Dutch came upon Taiwan, they thought it was so beautiful they called it “Ilha Formosa,” meaning “Beautiful Island.” The Dutch won control of Taiwan from the Chinese Ming Dynasty in 1624. A year later, in 1625, the Spanish, who had taken control of the Philippines, arrived in Northern Taiwan under the guise of wanting to protect their colonies in Asia. The Dutch were wary of the arrival of the Spanish but did not enter into any conflicts until 1642, when the Spanish moved most of their soldiers from Taiwan to defend their colony in the Philippines. The Dutch took advantage of Spain’s lack of defense and took over the whole island.¹⁹

When the Europeans first discovered Taiwan, they did not expect that this island was worthy of being made a colony. Soon, however, they discovered that Taiwan was a fertile island, where they could grow food staples and its location in the Pacific provided access to a great amount of seafood. During the time of Spanish and Dutch rule, missionaries accompanied the soldiers to their newly claimed colonies, including Taiwan. This was the first time that Christianity made landfall in Taiwan. A Spanish priest, Father Bartolome Martinez, came to Taiwan to evangelize in 1626 and built the

¹⁹ 李政隆 (Lee, Cheng-Lung), *台灣史 I* (Taipei: 台灣研究室, 2008), 38.

first church in Taiwan. He was able to connect with the local people and to convert them to Catholicism through being loving and compassionate. In the three years he worked in Taiwan, it is said that he baptized 300.²⁰ Very soon, the Dutch sent Rev. George Candidius and Rev. Robert Junius to Taiwan in 1627 and 1629 respectively to evangelize the aboriginal people of Taiwan. They built a church in 1631, but also established a school in 1636. They, too, spent a lot of time overcoming the suspicion that the local residents had for the Dutch. These missionaries made efforts to learn the local language, to translate the Bible into local dialects, and to establish schools. They took care of the poor and demonstrated their strong faith, inspiring them to convert to Christianity.²¹ Many more missionaries followed in later years, and they continued the work of bringing the Gospel.

In 1662, the Dutch were driven out by the last remnant of the Ming dynasty, Zheng Chenggong, a Chinese military leader, who fled to Taiwan from the incoming Manchu army and its eventual rule. Zheng, also known as Koxinga, ruled Taiwan until 1683, in which time he was able to expel the Dutch, including the missionaries. Even though the Manchurians ruled over China, they did not attempt to colonize the island, so Taiwan was left alone and was not considered an official part of China. During this time, more immigrants arrived from China, especially from the Minnan area to Taiwan as a result of the Manchurian rule. This led to a population growth of ethnic Han people on the island. Though Taiwan was not an official part of China, when the Manchurians suffered defeat at the hands of the Japanese in 1895, they ceded Taiwan to Japan. At that time, Catholic Dominican missionaries returned to the island to once again evangelize Taiwan.²²

²⁰ Lee, 38.

²¹ Lee, 18-19.

²² Allen J. Swanson, *Mending the Nets: Taiwan Church Growth and Loss in the 1980's* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1986), 29.

The Japanese Era

When the Taiwanese found out their land had been ceded to Japan, they were appalled. Many protested against the Chinese concession, yet, there was nothing they could do against the much more powerful Japanese. During this time, people finally began to raise questions about nationalism and self-determination. For the first time, the Taiwanese wanted to be more unified politically and culturally; to encourage each other to think of themselves as Taiwanese. Yet, many tribes and groups of Taiwanese did not get along with each other, resulting in many internal conflicts. Many who became soldiers to fight against the Japanese, in reality, fought against each other. It was difficult to unify these groups politically because of the infighting and chaos. Soldiers, in the midst of the chaos, began to loot and hurt the local people. Eventually, the people had no other option but to open their arms for the more orderly Japanese soldiers. By the time the Japanese arrived in Taiwan, they did not have any problems taking over and they were able to control Taipei without the loss of even one soldier. This, however, did not mean that Japanese rule was entirely peaceful. There were protests and revolts against the Japanese throughout their rule in Taiwan even while those who lived in Taiwan did not work together and did not have a concept of being Taiwanese.

The Japanese thought of Taiwan as its own land, even though they considered the people of Taiwan inferior. They brought technological advancements to Taiwan, including revamping the rail system and other infrastructure such as roads and ports; they brought city planning to cities such as Taipei, Tainan, Kaohsiung. They also wanted to end some of the more traditional cultural practices in Taiwan that they felt were harmful, such as foot binding, and they banned the use of opium in Taiwan, which was a common practice in both Taiwan and China at that time. They also wanted to change clothing and hair styles to bring about more modernization. They wanted to bring to Taiwan their educational system and to introduce public health and medicine to combat the many tropical

diseases that existed. In short, the Japanese rule ushered Taiwan into the 20th century, on a par with the West and the rest of Japan.²³ Many of these changes remains in place today in modern Taiwan. Additionally, these changes affected many Taiwanese, including many who immigrated to the United States. At many Taiwanese churches, it is common to find among the elderly those who are comfortable conversing in Japanese and following Japanese cultural norms, such as my interviewees Mary and her husband, and a respondent from one of the churches, whom I call “Esther.”

The early 1900s brought some prosperity to Taiwan, as it was able to export raw materials, such as rice and salt. The development of the sugar industry brought newfound wealth to Taiwan, because the price for sugar had coincidentally skyrocketed at that time. After the First World War, much of Taiwanese society changed, as their Japanese rulers became less structurally racist against Taiwanese people. The Taiwanese and Japanese could intermarry for the first time; Taiwanese were given the same educational and career opportunities as the Japanese. There were no longer different rules for Japanese and Taiwanese and this allowed for more equality. In retrospect, these changes allowed the Taiwanese to look more favorably at Japanese rule when later they struggled against the Chinese. Compared to the White Terror of Chinese colonialism, a brutal regime that included genocide against the Taiwanese, many Taiwanese remember the benefits and growth that happened under Japanese rule. Japanese education and culture remain embedded in the lives of older Taiwanese. This impacts pastoral care, as Japanese culture values order, stoicism and privacy. The Taiwanese Americans who grew up during this era still feel that they always need to appear pulled together, both on the inside and the outside. In my experience, those who can appear to be calm and collected in the midst of hardship are felt to be “cultured” people to look up to.²⁴ My research demonstrates that this desire to put up a certain façade can be a barrier to care that pastors must

²³ Lee, 245-246.

²⁴ In my own childhood, my parents held up those people and their behavior as something to be emulated.

break through. Asian culture maintains an inner and an outer presentation, where sharing troubles and vulnerability is discouraged.

In 1865, British missionaries arrived in Southern Taiwan and established the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT), bringing with them their missionaries. The PCT has become Taiwan's largest denomination and is still active in modern Taiwan. British doctor James Maxwell came to the south and Canadian pastor Rev. George Mackay to the north. These two men came to Taiwan to evangelize, but also brought western medicine to heal and save and improve lives. Rev. Mackay established a hospital in Taipei in 1880 and a medical school two years later. Mackay Memorial Hospital continues to be a thriving hospital which takes care of clergy for no fee and includes a clinical pastoral education program. Similarly, Dr. Maxwell also established a medical clinic in Tainan.²⁵ Though their numbers were small, Christians became associated with the development of schools, universities, hospitals, and orphanages and Christians were well represented in education, government, and the social service professions, especially in rural areas.²⁶ In the beginning, the Japanese did not have any problems with the missionaries in Taiwan and the church in Taiwan "enjoyed a fair amount of religious freedom under their control."²⁷ In 1940, as World War II was underway, however, the Japanese expelled all foreign missionaries from Taiwan and the Taiwanese church was left isolated from the missionaries and their churches. In spite of this, the PCT was able to continue on its own, without the missionaries.²⁸ This allowed the PCT to become an indigenous church that was independent from the western churches that had sent missionaries to Taiwan. It began to seek out missions that were important to the people of Taiwan and became a part of the global church in its own right.

²⁵ Lee, 246.

²⁶ 黃武東 (Huang Wu Dong), *北美洲台灣基督教會開拓史* [*The Development of North American Taiwanese Christian Church*]. Accessed 15 October 2018. <http://tccna.org/History/Churches%20in%20NA.htm>

²⁷ Swanson, 29.

²⁸ Swanson, 29.

The Chinese Occupation: Chiang Kai-Shek and the KMT

After the war, the Japanese were forced to give up Taiwan as a condition of their surrender. Rather than Taiwan finally becoming an independent nation, the Americans and the Chinese Nationalists occupied Taiwan. This occupation, like all previous colonizations, was a brutal and traumatic one. The Chinese military looted and took over private corporations as well as confiscating real estate. The new Chinese government, headed by Chiang Kai-Shek and his Chinese soldiers, were corrupt and abusive and did not bring any benefit to the island like its Japanese predecessor had. In fact, China had not seen much of the technology that existed in Taiwan, such as electricity and indoor plumbing.²⁹ In response to this new take-over, the Taiwan people began to think even more strongly about self-determination and independence. They became so frustrated that they were getting ready to “break with the mainland, anticipating final chaotic dissolution of the economic and political structure at Shanghai.”³⁰ The people of Taiwan attempted to get help from the United States as tensions grew, but Washington was unresponsive.

The tension between the Taiwanese and the Chinese finally culminated on February 27, 1947, when the Chinese Monopoly Bureau agents accosted and attacked a woman who was selling untaxed cigarettes on the street. When a crowd gathered, angry at the treatment of the woman, the agents began shooting at the crowd. The civil police appeared in an attempt to calm the situation and remove those agents, but the crowd “burned the Monopoly Bureau truck and its contents on the street.”³¹ The next day about 2000 protestors gathered in the area of the headquarters of the

²⁹ As a child, I was told a story of how the Nationalist armies were terrified of electricity and would not walk under lines. Addition, there was a story about how Chiang Kai-Shek almost killed a hardware store owner for selling him a defective facet, because when he put it against the wall, no water came out. The hardware store owner had to tell him that it was not the facet, but the plumbing that brought water into the buildings.

³⁰ George Kerr, *Formosa Betrayed* (Manchester: Camphor Press, 2018), Intro, XI, Kindle.

³¹ Kerr, *Formosa Betrayed*, Intro, XII.

Monopoly Bureau, protesting the government's monopolistic practices and demanding justice for the woman who was slain the evening before, as well as calling for the resignation of the Bureau Chief. This protest turned violent as the crowd gave expression to its anger at the mistreatment and abuse they suffered. Rioting ensued on different parts of the island and the Chinese responded by shooting into the crowds; martial law was enacted that evening.

On March 1, the government in place attempted to appease the people by trying to settle the matter. The government promised to make reforms and addressed the families of those who had died and the Formosan leaders who had organized the protests attempted to "bring reforms within the existing political framework," hoping that by utilizing democratic principles, they would have support of the Western democracies and the United Nations. On March 8, 1947, Chinese Nationalist soldiers arrived from China to assist the government. Machine guns were fired; soldiers shot into everything and anything and began to attack anyone in the streets. At the same time, the government began systematically looking for the organizers of the reform movement and anyone they felt was a threat, including all the "editors, lawyers, doctors, or businessmen who had taken an active part in preparing the reform program."³² It is estimated that during the month of March, more than 10,000 Taiwanese died at the hands of the Chinese.

The Nationalist Chinese refugees initiated a brutal regime whereby they imposed their identity, language, and culture onto the people already living on the island, holding themselves superior to the islanders. They enacted martial law that controlled the island for decades and many disappeared. Stories circulated that the government was spying on Taiwanese overseas about their pro-Taiwan views. The trauma of the lack of self-determination and loss of identity on top of the physical violence encouraged many to leave Taiwan to see refuge elsewhere, including Japan and the West. This belief in an independent Taiwan colored the life of both the Taiwanese Presbyterian

³² Kerr., XIV: The March Massacre, "The Betrayal."

churches (TPC) and Taiwanese Americans Christians. Like its PCT counterparts, Taiwanese American Presbyterian Churches had served an important political role in the United States. One of the pastors I interviewed, whom I call “Pastor James,”³³ reports that there are still churches in Southern California, especially the ones that are not community churches, that spend time focusing on the political situation in Taiwan. Carolyn Chen also noticed this phenomenon, documenting that in 1999, when one of Taiwan’s presidential candidates, Chen Shui-Bien came to Pasadena, California to campaign, he spoke to his audience of Taiwanese Americans using the Christian imagery of the cross that he had to bear despite the small population of Christians in Taiwan.³⁴ She argued that Taiwanese immigrants demonstrate a strong sense of “ethnic identity and political involvement even in the diaspora.”³⁵

The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan

Christian missionaries have worked in Taiwan since the Dutch times. However, the oldest and largest of the Christian denominations in Taiwan, the PCT, considers its founding to be in 1865, the year Dr. Maxwell came to Taiwan.³⁶ Christian missionaries opened the schools, including the first schools for girls and for the blind and deaf, opened the first western hospital, and brought in the first printing press. Though the Japanese expelled the missionaries, the PCT was able to continue with its mission in Taiwan.³⁷ As an organization, the PCT was always subversive. Even though the Japanese strongly pressured people to speak and use Japanese, the PCT resisted and continued to use the vernacular in its activities, including holding services in Hoklo, Hakka, and various aboriginal

³³ Name has been changed to protect his privacy.

³⁴ Chen, 17.

³⁵ Chen, 16-17.

³⁶ The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, “Introduction” accessed 11 September 2018, found at http://english.pct.org.tw/enWho_int_Cro.htm

³⁷ The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, “Introduction.”

languages. Since becoming an independent church, PCT became more indigenous, involving itself in the politics of identity and self-determination in Taiwan. The PCT issued public statements for democracy in 1971, 1975, and 1977, which critiqued the Chinese Kuomintang (KMT) rule. Additionally, individual pastors participated in events for human rights. On International Human Rights Day on December 10, 1979, there was a rally for human rights during which many Taiwanese, including many pastors, were arrested.³⁸ In 1980, six members of the church, including the PCT General Secretary, were arrested for protecting an organizer of a human rights protest. The church continued to march and protest after martial law was lifted in 1987.³⁹ It moved to protect people from government harm, becoming an essential part of the Taiwanese independence movement.

Because the PCT was a part of the great worldwide church body, it brought global attention to the Taiwanese situation, including its appeal to members of the United States Congress and human rights organizations.⁴⁰ The trials that took place after International Human Rights Day, for example, were open to the public because of pressures on the government imposed by the United States and other world-wide bodies.⁴¹ The PCT became involved in worldwide Christian organizations, such as the World Council of Churches, because of which they were able to share the plight of the Taiwanese with international Christian organizations. In the 1990s, they published another three statements about the sovereignty of Taiwan, an anti-nuclear declaration, and the relationship between Taiwan and China. Even after martial law was lifted and Taiwan made the shift into a democracy, the PCT continued to “identify with this land, to share the aspirations of its people and to be in solidarity with them. Committed to pray and strive for justice, peace, integrity of

³⁸ Chien-Di Hung, *In Search of Taiwanese Identity: Trauma, Formation, and Recovery*. Dissertation (May 2000), 156.

³⁹ Yoshihisa Amae, *Taiwan's Exodus: The Presbyterian Church in Taiwanese Nationalism, 1945-1992*. Dissertation (May 2007), 4.

⁴⁰ Amae, 17.

⁴¹ Hung, 156.

creation, and the guarantee of full human rights in Taiwan as well as in the wider global community.”⁴² The connection that PCT has with the worldwide church body continues to be a venue that allows for the international world to see the political and social situation in Taiwan. The relationship between the Taiwanese American Presbyterian Churches and the PCT continues to be strong. These Taiwanese American churches often invite and encourage the participation of pastors and other members of the PCT to their US churches, to sing, to preach, to participate in retreats and conferences, and to fundraise for different ministries.

Defining “Taiwanese”

Taiwan’s colonial history and the history of its numerous ethnic groups has made it difficult to define Taiwanese people. According to the CIA World Factbook, there are sixteen recognized aboriginal tribes.⁴³ Additionally, Allen Swanson, in his research in the 1980s about churches in the plains of Taiwan, made three Chinese ethnic distinctions: Minnan, Hakka, and Mandarin.⁴⁴ The early Chinese immigrants—a majority of whom were Hoklo, also known as Minnan people, and the Hakka peoples, with Hoklo people—made up a majority of the population.⁴⁵ These groups are commonly known as the “Taiwanese.”⁴⁶ Finally, there were the Chinese (also called *waishenren*) who arrived after the Second World War who came from a diversity of cultures and spoke a variety of local dialects, but who shared the common Mandarin language.⁴⁷ According to Lee, this diversity among the Taiwanese has always made it difficult for them to establish a sense of unity, and the

⁴² The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, “Social Justice and Social Welfare” found at http://english.pct.org.tw/enWho_int_Soc.htm

⁴³ The Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook*, “People and Society” accessed 12 September 2018, found at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tw.html>

⁴⁴ Swanson, 35-36.

⁴⁵ CIA, “People and Society.”

⁴⁶ Swanson, 36.

⁴⁷ Swanson, 37.

different groups have not always gotten along.⁴⁸ For the purposes of this research project, I am using a narrow definition of Taiwanese, which includes those who self-identify as ethnically Taiwanese, and not as Chinese. These tend to be the Minnan and Hakka as described by Swanson; but it also includes aboriginal Taiwanese. I define Taiwanese American Churches as churches that are comprised primarily of Taiwanese, those who self-identify as Taiwanese, and include at least one group or service that uses any of the Taiwanese languages. The Taiwanese American Presbyterian Churches in the United States that I use for my study are reformed churches whose founding members were influenced by the reformed missionaries who established the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT).

Churches in Taiwan

According to Swanson, five distinct church traditions can be found in Taiwan: three are Mandarin and two are Taiwanese. Among them are two large, independent Mandarin churches called Assembly Hall and True Jesus Church that have no ties to any other Christian communities in the world and claim to be “uncontaminated by western thought or control.”⁴⁹ There are also mainline Mandarin churches, which were originally founded and guided by missionaries to China. These churches continue to be guided by the missionaries to China and were supported by their western counterparts. Finally, there are mandarin local churches that are independent, unrelated with the missionaries to China, but are maintained with the cooperation of other churches. Taiwanese churches can be categorized as the Taiwanese Presbyterian Church and as non-Presbyterian Taiwanese churches. However, the distinctions are not based on linguistics. PCT churches use Minnan, Hakka, Mandarin, and various mountain dialects. Rather, these are cultural distinctions

⁴⁸ Lee, 192-193.

⁴⁹ Swanson, 37.

based on self-identity, that means, based on whether individuals see themselves as Taiwanese or Chinese. While some Taiwanese-speaking Christians are not Presbyterian, most “Minnan-speaking churches have some form of relationship with ‘mainline’ historic churches related to the west.”⁵⁰ Because of this organization, Taiwanese American churches generally tend to be denominationally affiliated as well, with most being affiliated with the Presbyterian Church, USA (PCUSA) leaving a handful that are affiliated in the Reformed Church in America (RCA).

Taiwanese Christians in the United States

In the 1950s and 1960s, most Christian Taiwanese international students in the United States were members of the PCT.⁵¹ Those who were able to go abroad were relatively wealthy and Christians in Taiwan tended to be wealthier and better educated than the average Taiwanese person. Being Christian, then, “became synonymous with being educated and modern.”⁵² Those who decided to remain Christians even out of the watchful eye of their families, attended American churches, including English speaking and, if available, Mandarin speaking churches, because they felt more comfortable with the language. Yet, Taiwanese people looked for other Taiwanese Christians even though their numbers were small. When a core group of Taiwanese Christians was able to find each other, they fellowshiped together, starting with Bible Studies, followed by worship in homes. When Taiwanese Christians got together, they brought hymns and the Bible, as well as a dish for pot luck. The host of the home also hosted the fellowship. They used Taiwanese to sing hymns, pray, read the Bible and discuss the topic for the session. When they discussed a topic, they did not shy away from expressing different opinions. Sometimes, fierce debates occurred, but nobody would

⁵⁰ Swanson, 38.

⁵¹ Huang. 北美洲台灣基督教會開拓史 [A History of the Development of Taiwanese Christian Churches in North America]. “Taiwanese Christians in North America (Chapter 2).” Accessed 15 October 2018. <http://tccna.org/History/Churches%20in%20NA.htm>

⁵² Chen, 85.

leave angry.⁵³ There were times when people did not feel that they were being adequately guided, but they always prayed for the Lord's guidance even as they struggled to gain understanding.

After a while, as the fellowship numbers increased, the group became too large to meet in private homes. Thus, they began to rent out space for their gatherings from local churches on Sunday afternoons. Finally, when the fellowship was large enough, they were able to establish a church. This was how the first Taiwanese American church was established in New York. Taiwanese in New York gathered for a Bible Study/Fellowship group in 1968 and became a full-fledged church in 1971.⁵⁴ A year later, in nearby New Jersey, another Bible Study/Fellowship group was established, but it was not until 1980 that they had expanded into a church. As a church, they were now able to hire pastors, whom they recruited from Taiwan. The Taiwanese American churches in the reformed tradition in the United States maintained most of the format used by the PCT churches in Taiwan, including the same Bibles, hymnals, and liturgy, even though not all of the churches ended up formally joining a reformed denomination.

By 1982, there were forty-four Taiwanese American Churches and only sixteen had been established by clergy; twenty-eight had been established by people seeking a Taiwanese church community.⁵⁵ Churches that started with lay leadership had their own culture and were self-sufficient. Knowing this history, it is understandable that Taiwanese American Churches were not only influenced by the traditional reformed polity and its congregational structure, but also grew out of an organic need for worship and community. This meant that these churches started out with members who became their own leaders. They were committed to performing all administrative aspects of running a church as well as providing ministerial support and practical care to their congregation on their own rather than relying on a pastor, because their reality called for self-

⁵³ Huang, "Taiwanese Christians in North America (Chapter 2)."

⁵⁴ Huang, "Taiwanese Christians in North America (Chapter 2)."

⁵⁵ Huang, "Taiwanese Christians in North America (Chapter 2)."

sufficiency. As Taiwanese Americans are generally very well educated, they were able to run their Bible Studies and fellowship groups smoothly and successfully. Perhaps this is why Taiwanese American Churches feel comfortable with the church not calling a pastor. At any given time, there are multiple Taiwanese American churches that do not have a pastor, including many in Southern California.

Brief History of Pastoral Care & Taiwanese Christianity

The missionaries that came to Taiwan and established the PCT were rooted in reformed tradition. This history and tradition are important to understand as they relate to the Taiwanese Church, including how the reformed tradition has influenced the Taiwanese in polity, liturgy, and pastoral care, among other aspects of the church. Throughout history, Christians are in relationship not only to God, but to each other. While Christ is the head, the believers make up the body. This makes community the central location of the Christian faith and pastoral care inherently social. The understanding of pastoral care has changed throughout history, but at its core, pastoral care deals with how people understand and respond to sin, meaning that there is work that needs to be done for “every human soul. Pastoral care then becomes a matter of healing and restoration.”⁵⁶ As its relationship to society at large has changed, the church has had to shift its perspective on the work of providing care to be more than healing and restoration. Pastoral care needs to be about sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding one’s flock, not only for individuals but also the community. The work of pastoral care may not always be appreciated and understood by the church or even individuals in the church, but it must be intentional on the part of caregivers.

Thus, Christian pastoral care has always had a focus on the community, rather than simply on individuals. In the 16th century, Martin Luther came to believe that salvation was freely given by

⁵⁶ G.R. Evans, *A History of Pastoral Care*, (London: Cassell, 2000), 1.

the love of God and was given to the faithful, who were themselves priests who had the ability to connect with God as individuals: the priesthood should be comprised of all believers, for all believers, not limited to the select few. This new idea sparked the Reformation. One such reformer was Martin Bucer, who focused on pastoral care. Bucer believed it was the responsibility of the whole community for the individuals within it and the care of persons cannot be done provided merely by one person. The care of the soul should be carried out as part of the proclamation of the Word of God: by preaching, teaching, and keeping the faithful informed. Congregations should have as many elders and deacons as they need. While the pastor remain central to the faith, many of the sacramental powers that priests have traditionally held, especially the Sacrament of Confession, have fallen away. For Taiwanese, this kind of community responsibility and connection was appealing and helpful because they understand and live in a communal context.

The reformers turned away from the hierarchical structure of the church toward a more individualized connection with God and a more cooperative model of church. Elders watched over the congregation to ensure that the faithful understood faith correctly and to protect them; and deacons “visited the sick, the imprisoned, the widows and orphans and were charged to catechize the children.”⁵⁷ Pastoral care was about the nurturing and strengthening of the practice of faith of individuals and being present to those who struggle with issues in their lives. To develop an authentic and personal relationship with God that is transformative, one must be able to understand the Word. This meant that people must be actively engaged in an effort to understand their faith, which involves reading the scriptures, attending worship, and listening to the sermon, which calls people to the faith and teaches the faithful what they need to know and do. This is the kind of

⁵⁷ L.O. Mills, “Pastoral Care (History, Traditions, and Definitions),” in *The Concise Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling* ed., Glenn Asquith, Jr., (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010), 58.

engaged faith shared in common by the individuals I interviewed. They are all pursuing a deeper connection to and understanding of God and seeking solace in their faith and the promises of God.

As people started to rely heavily on science and the scientific method during the Enlightenment, there was an attempt to understand the world in a secular way, without God's presence and divine intervention in human life through the use of reason and empirical methods. As the sciences gained traction, people looked for scientific proof for the existence of God. Care in this time still focused on sustaining people through life, guiding them to salvation, and bringing morality into their lives. However, the writing of pastoral care also took on a more practical emphasis, influenced by newfound secularism. Care was directed toward "the preservation of the faith among the people, countering the secularizing tendency of the times,"⁵⁸ assisting the faithful to live a moral and faithful life. An influential theologian in the 17th century, Richard Baxter, encouraged the pastor to cultivate a whole relationship with the faithful that included learning about the personal details of their lives and taking seriously the relationship between the caregiver and care seeker.⁵⁹ Additionally, Baxter felt that people did not exist in a vacuum and one's family profoundly influenced each person's life, which led him to spend much of his time with families, visiting and interviewing them while he was providing care. All the knowledge Baxter had gathered from the relationships he cultivated was then used to give advice. The pastors I interviewed held up building relationships with their members as being of utmost importance. They believe that without the relationship, they would not be privy to the vulnerabilities and the most private thoughts, preventing them from offering good pastoral care.

The twentieth century brought about the rise of psychology and other social sciences that strongly influenced pastoral care. These sciences shifted the understanding of distress and emotional

⁵⁸ Charles Gerkin, *An Introduction to Pastoral Care* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 46.

⁵⁹ Gerkin, 45-46.

and mental suffering and gave rise to new theories on how to bring freedom from that pain. The growing field of psychology offered pastors a new way to approach care seekers, enhancing their ability to minister to those who were troubled. Psychology provided more insight into human lives and moved the “theological notion of salvation to the cultural ideal of self-realization as the goal of pastoral care.”⁶⁰ Pastoral theologians at this time focused on trying to create a ministry that was based on the theology of human experience, which utilizes the contributions of other disciplines. In the latter part of the twentieth century, pastoral care began to pay attention to the marginalized voices that had previously been ignored. The diversity of care, including the voices of women, different ethnic and cultural groups, and even different religions, has all impacted the understanding and practice of pastoral care. Additionally, postcolonial, liberation, feminist, and other postmodern approaches have transformed the goals of pastoral care. With these new lenses, pastoral caregivers began to see better how the structure of society can and does have a strong influence on the problems people face. Thus, pastoral care theologians and practitioners began to take seriously the world from which individuals come, understanding that the world is not black and white, but comes in many shades of gray that need to be taken into consideration when giving care that includes but is not limited to a person’s family of origin and their life experiences. In this way, in order to better care for the individual, pastoral care began to focus on understanding the whole community.

Thus, the Reformed understanding of pastoral care and of the responsibilities of the church is one of the ways that pastoral care is offered, with the pastors taking the lead to guide their lay leaders and members to create a community of care using their own experience and deep reflection to present a non-judgmental, God-centered presence. This, along with the communal values of Taiwanese culture and the experience of colonialism and immigration, motivates the whole church to be present to offer pastoral care and to become a community of care that becomes akin to family.

⁶⁰ Mills, 68.

The presence of the church helps these immigrants create a new definition of family in the United States, where family is comprised of not just kinfolk, but includes their compatriots who have also left their families and lives behind in Taiwan in pursuit of a new life in the United States.

Taiwanese American Churches & Immigrants

In Taiwan, Christians are approximately 3.9% of the total population.⁶¹ Yet, in the United States, that percentage is between twenty and twenty-five percent of the Taiwanese American population, according to Chen. Some of increase could be explained by the types of people who immigrated to the US. The “majority of immigrants from Taiwan were elite graduate students from middle class backgrounds”⁶² and many immigrated through the occupation preference categories. These better educated, more Western-minded Taiwanese tended to be Christian, influenced by the western missionaries in their lives.⁶³ Furthermore, there were many Taiwanese refugees that were blacklisted by the ruling party in Taiwan for participating in the Taiwan independence movement, a movement that the TPC was very involved in as well.⁶⁴ These were likely factors for higher Christian immigration to the US and positive association of the church for early, non-Christian immigrants. Yet, there is also the reality that the church provided more than just a holy space for Christians. Sociologists have long thought that the role of religion was more than to simply offer a place of worship. They believed that religion helped immigrants adapt to their new home and also helped to preserve the culture they left behind. Religious institutions are “centers of religious worship and

⁶¹ “Religion” in *The World Factbook: Taiwan*, CIA, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tw.html>, accessed 23 April 2018.

⁶² Chen, 19-20.

⁶³ Chen, 85.

⁶⁴ Chen, 20, 30.

educational, cultural, social, political, and social service activities.”⁶⁵ Chen, in her sociological study of Taiwanese American immigrants found this to be accurate in this community as well.

Taiwanese American churches are full of people who have immigrated from Taiwan who understand the challenges of immigration and the needs of newly arrived immigrants. Thus, the church is perfectly set up to offer help to new immigrants. People looked to the church when they first arrived in the United States and continued to network with fellow members for further support. The people who immigrated to the United States did not necessarily have family in the country or have access to any resources; they were embarking on an adventure on their own, especially the young people who were coming as students. Inevitably, in their pre-travel research, they would be pointed toward the Taiwanese American Church as a safe place to ask for assistance.⁶⁶ Because of the connection of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, people recognized that the church in the United States was a place to go. One of the churches that I researched, which I call “Formosa Church” in Southern California, was established early on in the wave of Taiwanese immigration and was one of the first churches in Southern California. A long-time member explained to me in our conversation during the lunch/fellowship time, that in the 1980s, the church would get often receive calls and visits from recent immigrants, who turned to the community to find support. The pastor of Formosa Church commented, “they [Formosa Church] did not have to evangelize back then. People got off the plane and came to church.” The church offered practical support, including where to find the things people needed for their day to day living. The church connected newcomers with resources, the most important being the social capital of people who could be a substitute for their families.

⁶⁵ Chen, 5-6.

⁶⁶ I was told this during fellowship hour during my participant observation at Formosa Church.

The church today continues to be a source of support and to provide a network for people today, as every Taiwanese church I have been a part of has received inquiries from students just arriving in the United States. Concerned parents of international students will contact churches and connect their children with the church, sometimes asking questions about housing and transportation. When my father was a pastor in the Boston area, he often received phone calls or emails from concerned parents wanting to make a connection with a community for their children. There were times when my parents even met new students in Taiwan when they were visiting. When the students finally arrived, the college student ministry and young professional fellowship of the Taiwanese American church where I attended met new students at the airport and immediately took them to a store to set them up with a cellphone before dropping them off at their home. They continue to be involved in the lives of these students, inviting them to fellowship, to meals, and to church. It has been an open and welcoming community that has fostered many close relationships.

Even though people came to church because of their need for resources and support, many decided to stay. The church I call Formosa Church started with thirty-seven members and some forty regular attendees who were not members, but by the time the 1980s came around, the population of the church had exploded to about 250 people. Thus, for many of the new immigrants, Sundays became a time when people could gather for more than just worship. The church became like family. During that time in the early days of immigration, the church was never lacking in members who served the community while they evangelized and were at the center of the community. Because Sunday worship is only an hour and a half, people had plenty of time to fellowship with one another. The pastor of the second church in my study which I call “Taiwan Church” said that they have adult Sunday School every other week, because while people wanted to have Sunday School, they also valued the time for fellowship. Hardly anyone left before they finished their prolonged lunches, which both churches provide. Both churches also have activities

for members outside of church; Taiwan Church recently even organized an overseas tour to Israel in which over twenty members participated.

Further, the immigrant church was a safe place where Taiwanese people could find a sense of belonging and self-worth in a new and different country; one that was sometimes racist and hostile. This is a place to which they come for some familiarity and sense of belonging; a place where one's personhood is affirmed and respected, rather than denied. Chen illustrated a story of an immigrant who needed to find a new job because the job he held when he first arrived in the country seemed shaky and he was worried that he might lose it. His wife, a new convert, requested prayers for her husband in her prayer group. "The news that Sister Hou's husband needed a new job spread around the church. Without lifting a single finger, his problem was solved."⁶⁷ This trust in the personhood and capability of the job seeker gave him a sense of self-worth and value. In this way, the church is a safety net that can catch people before they fall, a place where people can turn when they are in need of assistance. For people who had left their safety net in Taiwan, the church is a place where they can confidently establish a new family and a new support system that can help them navigate life in the United States.

Moreover, the church is also a place where the immigrants have status and power, because it is one of the few places where they are respected and can be elected to leadership positions. This stands in sharp contrast to their lack of power and value in the greater society. The church, especially churches in the reformed tradition, provide ample opportunities to be seen and, if desired, be a leader. Plenty of activities need coordinating; in Southern California, the Taiwanese Presbyterian Churches arrange for four outings a year, aimed at seniors, though all are free to participate.⁶⁸ Each church has a representative who invites participants, organizes transportation,

⁶⁷ Chen, 45.

⁶⁸ Heard at Taiwan Church and explained by Pastor James.

and chooses the restaurant for the meal during the outing. There are also choirs, women's groups, Bible Studies. Many elder and deacon leadership positions open in the church that require volunteers. In Presbyterian polity, each elder and deacon holds the position for three-year terms, so opportunities quickly arise for leadership.

Finally, the Taiwanese American immigrant church is a place that maintains the Taiwanese culture, such as the language and food. Here, Taiwanese Americans do not need to struggle with speaking English or deal with the frustration of not being understood. They can hold discussions about culture, politics, and other topics of interest to them. Especially since the majority of these Taiwanese American Presbyterian churches share a similar political understanding for Taiwan, it is easy for the members to talk about Taiwanese politics. According to Pastor James, in one of the churches I researched, there are often political events that take place at Taiwanese Presbyterian Churches in Southern California. It is not uncommon for these Churches to lose almost half their population when presidential elections take place.⁶⁹ Furthermore, there are often topics of interest such as one's health, travel, and even physical activities like playing ping pong.⁷⁰ Perhaps in Southern California good Taiwanese food is not an important reason to come to church, but elsewhere in the country where there is not a plethora of authentic Taiwanese restaurants, people look forward to the meals provided at church, as each Sunday a different person, typically a very good cook, is in charge of making the meal. Nonetheless, breaking bread and sharing the meal is an important part of the fellowship, which I will address later.

Finally, parents can bring their Americanized children to be instilled with traditional cultural values and understanding, as well as to provide language training. While some churches will have an

⁶⁹ This has happened at both of the churches my father has served at, as well as being true for the two churches that I interviewed for this project.

⁷⁰ All the churches I have attended have had a room with ping pong tournament trophies, indicating this is a popular sport among church members and churches.

English ministry for the older children and teenagers, many children's ministries, including the ones at churches in which I have been a part, utilize Mandarin and Taiwanese to teach the children. Moreover, in the summers, PCT in Taiwan hosts an annual mission program called "I Love Taiwan" for young adults and youths who live overseas, in which many Taiwanese American Presbyterian churches participate. This is a program where young people from all over the world have the opportunity to do mission work with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan for almost a month. Parents can send their American children to experience Taiwan under the positive influence of the church. This helps young people develop a connection to Taiwan.

Taiwanese American Churches: Unhindered By Distance

As Taiwanese Americans strive to find their identities, hindered by their immigration to the United States with the need to add yet another culture into the mix, the Church serves many functions for them. Taiwanese American Presbyterian churches are what I would label affinity churches: a church that is comprised of people who share the same affinity and self-identify as Taiwanese. I use the term affinity to describe these churches because their members may not be from the local community but may live geographically distant from each other and from the church itself. The church was a readymade community of other Taiwanese immigrants that the newcomers could join as soon as they arrived. While there were other Taiwanese organizations that existed, "they did not meet on a weekly basis and did not cultivate the same kinds of communal ties that churches did."⁷¹ The church provides a more Americanized community to which all people, not just Christians, can belong. I have a non-religious aunt who one day announced that she had actually been baptized years ago. Surprised, I asked how this had happened. She said that she had friends who invited her to go to church to play mahjong. She started attending church for the mahjong and

⁷¹ Chen, 30.

the fellowship and eventually was baptized even though she was not a believer. The conversion to Christianity is “driven by immigrants’ needs for belonging and security, institutional strategies of evangelism and questions of meaning.”⁷² Yet, many were led by faith and did come to Christ and as the population grew and people began migrating to different parts of Los Angeles for jobs or family or any other reasons, they needed churches that were closer. A group of leaders at Formosa Church addressed this problem and planted a new church elsewhere in Los Angeles. Some people decided to move to a more local church, but others decided to stay at Formosa Church, the first church to which they belonged when they immigrated to the United States.⁷³

Thus, it is easy to understand why Taiwanese American Presbyterian churches tend to be affinity congregations, instead of a local church for the geographic community. These churches were not looking to draw only those whose main goal is to serve their local community like the traditional Christian parish. Rather, they served a very specific purpose for a particular group. Members of these churches speak Taiwanese, and their hope was to build a community to support and network with immigrants and other Taiwanese and to maintain their culture, through which they have “maintained a strong political and ethnic identity, with prominent Taiwanese American ministers like C.S. Song calling for Taiwanese self-determination.”⁷⁴

As more people started moving to different areas of Southern California, more and more churches were established to accommodate them with some churches adopting a parish model while still maintaining their Taiwanese identity and *raison d’être*. Today, the largest number of Taiwanese American PCUSA churches in the United States are in Southern California, because of the warm weather and the proximity to Taiwan. Taiwanese people tend to move there when they retire. Yet,

⁷² Chen, 43.

⁷³ Formosa Church, “History of Formosa Church.” This was a document written up by the members of the Formosa Church that is only available through them that Pastor Peter sent to me.

⁷⁴ Chen, 30.

because of their comfort level, tradition of attending certain churches, and the sense of belonging, many continue to participate in the church they attended before moving. Formosa Church is an affinity community where many members drive for hours, roundtrip, so they can worship with those who have become family through the decades.

On the other hand, Taiwan Church is a local church that was established decades later, in a community to which many Taiwanese had moved as immigration increased in the Los Angeles area and people were priced further and further out of the city. Once a critical mass was reached a Taiwanese pastor felt a need to establish a church for the local people, rather than having travel so far to attend church. Because of this, the vast majority of church members live within 15 minutes of the church. Since they live close, the Taiwan church truly doubles as a community center, with many activities in the church throughout the week. Interestingly, one member who had belonged to Formosa Church for a long time but had recently moved to a city that was closer to Taiwan Church. Therefore, she decided to attend Taiwan Church since it was a Taiwanese Presbyterian Church. She knew the culture of the church would probably be familiar. However, despite the hours long commute, she has not completely left Formosa Church. In fact, she has decided to split her membership and has continued to attend Formosa Church almost every other week, serving as its pianist. Thus, I can see that even if a church may be closer to where they live, the community they have come to know cannot be easily replaced. It takes a lot for people to leave one loved family for a new one. They will try to stay connected with the community however they can. I will discuss both Formosa Church and Taiwan Church in further detail in chapter three and discuss the influence of an affinity church and a community church culture on the pastoral care in chapter four.

Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and Contextual Theology

Pastoral care has always been a critical part of the Christian Church; the call to care for each other has been present since Biblical times. The New Testament and the care given by Christ to his people is an example of what care should be. With the growth of the sciences, pastoral caregivers became more aware of insights gained from the discipline of psychology that enabled them to help the care-seeker deal with their problems. It also enabled them to offer the additional option of receiving professional therapy. But in the 20th century, the view of pastoral care was broadened beyond the clergy to include a relationship with their communities within the unique context of social location. This shift allowed pastoral care to address the unique role of spirituality in relationships and in healing. In 1973, Shoki Coe, a Taiwanese American Theologian who lived in Taiwan under Japanese occupation, created and defined the term “contextualization,” using it to mean a “cross-cultural witness to Christianity in non-Western contexts.”⁷⁵ The use of this important term ushered in an era that focused on those whose voices have been marginalized by male, Western, academic Christianity. Contextual theologies originate from the perspective of the producers of a specific theology, allowing people with different experiences and contexts to speak their own truths and to critique the accepted norms. They are constructed with the focus on their relevance to the greater culture. This means that the voices from the margins, including that of feminists, liberationists from ethnic and cultural minorities, have begun to point out the problematic privileged societal structures of sexism, ageism, classism, and racism.

These once-marginalized voices are becoming more valued as people begin to understand the validity of these experiences because they embrace “all of living rather than something relegated to small portions of living.”⁷⁶ Contextual theology understands that theology is something that is lived, rather than something academic and written. At its center, it recognizes that meanings are made

⁷⁵ C.H. Kraft, “Contextual Theology” in *The Concise Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, ed. Glenn H. Asquith, Jr (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010), 94.

⁷⁶ Kraft, 96.

from within particular contexts. While it certainly could be formalized, the practice and experience of faith is also accepted as authoritative. The lesson of the contextual communal paradigm is its willingness to value people's own stories and voices. The understanding is that theology is not a universal language, but a more specific one that is for a certain time and place constructed by people in their own unique context. This theology can be specific to a group, such as Taiwanese Americans, explaining how their lives and their church reflect their understanding of faith and God.

History influences culture and vice versa. While the inhabitants of Taiwan have not always identified with the term "Taiwanese," the oppression they have suffered has brought them together with a desire for self-determination. Taiwanese culture, unfortunately, manifested the reality of deep suffering and hard struggle as well as the hope for 'Chhut-thau-thiⁿ,'⁷⁷ is a traditional proverb that means "to raise one's head out of the darkness to breathe the fresh air and see the blue sky."⁷⁸ This is a uniquely Taiwanese contextual theology that rose out of its political history, search for identity, and the desire for freedom and liberation. The Rev. Dr. Po Ho Huang argues that context is essential in witnessing to the gospel and in talking about theology. Chhut-thau-thiⁿ starts with and is centered around culture and engages the Gospel with culture and history. Taiwan's long colonial history has impacted the identity of the people of Taiwan, who Huang says are a "homeless people; though they have lived in their own land, they remain aliens."⁷⁹

The work of the church, then, is to be able to affirm that "the people, not colonial rulers, should be identified by the church as the subject of history" and provide the "theological foundation for the demands of self-determination and Chhut-thau-thiⁿ of the people of Taiwan."⁸⁰ This applies to Taiwanese immigrants, many of whom took whatever they owned and left to ensure their own

⁷⁷ Huang Po-Ho, *From Galilee to Tainan: Towards a Theology of Chhut-thau-thiⁿ* (Manila: Association for Theological Education in South East Asia, 2005), 8.

⁷⁸ Huang, 48.

⁷⁹ Huang, 66.

⁸⁰ Huang, 66-67.

survival, a sacrifice they made as the result of their struggle for identity, freedom, and self-determination. This theology is a plea for identity and self-determination; the “indigenization (adaption) of the universal principle of self-determination in the Taiwanese context.”⁸¹ This theology requires an understanding of both culture and the Gospel, under a “process of mutual criticism and enrichment.”⁸² The message of Chhut-thau-thiⁿ can be found in the Gospel, which is a liberative narrative for the people of God that “frees people and cultures and shapes people’s identities.”⁸³ In Taiwan, Christianity is a foreign religion. Therefore, if Christianity wants to become an indigenous religion that speaks for the people, the church must work to identify with the Taiwanese as it figures out its own pastoral identity. That the PCT is willing to stand on the side of the people for freedom and peace by participating in the social and political struggle for democracy and liberation is how the church reveals Christ’s radical love and message of transformation to the Taiwanese people.

While Chhut-thau-thiⁿ is a Taiwanese contextual theology, Taiwanese Americans are immigrants who left Taiwan behind, having lived through its historical reality. The story of Taiwanese people is a story of aliens, of a people who did not belong even on their own land, a situation that continued on for Taiwanese Americans, who left the island in search of self-determination and freedom. They were aliens in their own country because they lived under the control of foreigners, who claimed their land. Further, for Taiwanese who are Christian, their faith makes them foreigners among their own people. Becoming Christian means to reject “one’s family and lineage,”⁸⁴ becoming outcasts. Those who have left Taiwan also become foreigners in another country. Yet, in America their Christian faith is a way they can become part of mainstream America. Like their homeland counterparts, the Taiwanese American immigrant church continued the

⁸¹ Yoshihisa Amae, *Taiwan’s Exodus: The Presbyterian Church in Taiwanese Nationalism, 1945-1992*. Dissertation (May 2007), 23.

⁸² Huang, 67.

⁸³ Huang, 44.

⁸⁴ Chen, 69.

Presbyterian tradition of being involved in political work.⁸⁵ Even though some of these Taiwanese Americans had left Taiwan decades earlier, their connection with Taiwan continues to be important to them and gives them value. This connection extends to the church, a place where they can connect with others who understand their history, culture, and identity.

However, the potential problem with contextual theology is that it is possible that the focus can be too narrow or too imbedded in one part of a culture. It is important for contextual theology to remain centered in Christ so that it can find meaning in the here and now. Cultures are not monolithic or insular. There is a diversity of people and cultures within the dominant narrative that influences each other. Pastoral theologian Emmanuel Lartey called for yet another step forward beyond contextual theology. Using the lens of diversity, Lartey wanted to look at multiculturalism “interculturally.” With globalization and the rapid exchange of information and culture, the world has become a more complex place, where the “pre-colonial, colonial, neo-colonial, and postcolonial co-exist.”⁸⁶ Lartey, who was born in Ghana, studied in England, and now teaches in the United States, does not believe that it makes sense to look at a single culture in isolation, but to see it within the layers of its global context. Globalization and the rise of technology have brought together different cultures and contexts into dialogue so that people are beginning to grow and be shaped by multiple cultures rather than just one. Though our times and contexts have changed, we are forever expanding and incorporating new knowledge into our practice so that pastoral care is an always-evolving entity. Our influence on each other will illuminate new ways that we can grapple with human struggles and find new ways to care for each other.

Intercultural Pastoral Care

⁸⁵ This was voiced by a pastor in my interviews.

⁸⁶ Emmanuel Y. Lartey, *In Living Color: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2003), 40.

The world has become a smaller place with the development of technology that has helped people to connect with each other and find out what is going on in other parts of the world. People, especially Taiwanese Americans, are more mobile than they have ever been. This means that they do not exist in the vacuum of just one culture. By being Taiwanese American, their lives are very bicultural. In my study, “Esther” and “Paul” have traveled to Taiwan during the time I have been doing my research. In fact, Paul will have gone back to Taiwan twice recently and he is considering moving back to Taiwan and taking a job there. Esther and Paul⁸⁷ both grew up during the era of Japanese occupation in Taiwan. Esther spoke explicitly about this and about the influence of the stoic Japanese in her life. Culture, then, is not static, but an ever-changing entity influenced by its encounters with others. The biggest danger here is the assumption that one person can be the representative who speaks on behalf of the entire group, whether it is cultural, gender, ethnic, or any other. While there are certainly many common themes that arose from my interviews, it is the uniqueness of each individual, of each person’s experience and gifts that shine.

Intercultural pastoral care, then, seeks to address the complexity that stems from the modern global situation of this mix of cultures rather than to look at individuals as being of one culture. It acknowledges the complex interactions of people who have been formed and influenced by different cultures, acknowledging that all “interpretation and criticism is culturally conditioned, and its relevance is culturally determined.”⁸⁸ Because of this, no one person can encompass all that is true about the culture. Additionally, it looks at the power dynamics of dominant groups that either intentionally or unwittingly hold up their own perspectives and cultures as the normative experience while disregarding the less powerful. Intercultural understanding means acknowledging that even

⁸⁷ Names have been changed to protect the identity of my interviewees.

⁸⁸ K. Samuel Lee, “Much Depends on the Kitchen.” In *Healing Wisdom: Depth Psychology and the Pastoral Ministry*, eds. Kathleen J. Greider, Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger, and Felicity Brock Kelcourse (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 41.

people who have similar experiences may respond differently to the same situation. The intercultural approach tries to avoid reducing people to stereotypes and seeks to be a creative response to the pluralism that exists in our society today. Thus, intercultural pastoral care is motivated by love, which is also a force that propels the pastoral caregivers to “place themselves within this love and to become agents and conduits of it,”⁸⁹ realizing that it is God’s love and creative energy that brought about a diverse world that must be upheld and respected.

The lesson of present day, intercultural pastoral care is that with diversity comes different cultures, traditions, and rituals that we may not necessarily understand or even believe. These are contexts in which healing occurs. To bring about healing is to understand individuals’ connections with their culture, their values, and rituals. Daniël Louw, seeks “wholistic” forms of pastoral care that “determine the value and dignity of people within daily encounters”⁹⁰ so that the pastor becomes a guest in the story of the other. This calls for an inclusive approach that sees people as a part of their community, but also acknowledges the system in which they exist, and sees the public sphere in which all things are interrelated and connected as a web of issues that includes the political, environmental, social, and financial. Thus, pastoral care should be focused on the interconnectedness of relationships, going beyond the psychological experience to embrace our human connection with the natural and cosmic environment which nourishes us and in which we live and exist. It is from this acceptance of the other that pastoral caregivers can truly build a relationship. Having an open mind, committing ourselves to listening to the stories of others and offering support without judgment but with compassion and acceptance are the keys to pastoral care.

⁸⁹ Lartey, 32.

⁹⁰ Daniël Louw, Takaaki David Ito, Ulrike, Elsdörfer, *Encounter in Pastoral Care and Spiritual Healing: Towards an Integrative and Intercultural Approach* (Zürich: Lit Verlag GmbH & Co. KG Wien, 2012), 3.

Through my research, this is the work that I found the pastors doing in their churches. During his tenure as the pastor of the “Formosa Church,” “Pastor Peter”⁹¹ is cognizant that the work of relationship building is a long process that starts as soon as he becomes pastor of the church, so the families know that he cares about them. This way, when families need more support, the members already know they can trust him; they know they do not need to worry about appearances; he will come over to offer his support and presence for them, regardless of what the home looks like or what the complicated family dynamics are. Additionally, Pastor Peter also lets the families know that church elders will be notified and invited because it is the whole church that cares for its individual members and they are willing to fulfill their obligations to each other. The pastor of the other church, “Pastor James” practices weekly relationship building by giving his congregation assignments and connecting with them through numerous church activities and his hobbies. He pays attention to the relationship of the church where he will teach enough other members of the congregation to reach out to each other during hard times. He also understands the importance of a caring community that will be present to individuals.

Theology moves with us, whatever our context, and cannot be free from culture or history.⁹² Theological discourse is understood to be a “process, rather than a product.”⁹³ I argue that theology needs to take our stories seriously, whether or not they fit into a western context because God is not limited to any perspective. Our theology helps us define who we are and how we interpret what is happening to us, which is also what our stories and experience do for us.⁹⁴ This means that engaging in theological reflection gives people a way to describe and understand their “values and traditions that underpin their choices and convictions and deepens their understanding.”⁹⁵ In the same way,

⁹¹ All the names in this project has been changed to protect the identity and privacy of my subjects.

⁹² C.S. Song *Tell us Our Names: Story Theology from an Asian Perspective* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1987), 7-11.

⁹³ Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, and Frances Ward, *Theological Reflection: Methods* (London: SCM, 2005), 5.

⁹⁴ Halbur and Halbur, 75.

⁹⁵ Graham, Walton, and Ward, 5.

our stories can shape how we understand God and theology, because stories, whether or not they are explicitly religious, are nonetheless sacred.⁹⁶ Multiple fields, including theology, psychology, organizational culture, and sociology have found the importance of story and how stories can take us to the deepest part of human suffering and experience, transcending time and space, rather than being limited to a white, Western, male perspective. Through reflecting on and retelling our stories, we can experience healing, because we become receptive to the hope, faith, and life that only God can give. Yet, we must always be aware of who has written the story and who is telling the story, because the stories we are taught tend to be the stories of the powerful. Through stories, we can rectify theology by challenging the accepted norms, politics, and life within stories.

In difficult or dangerous times, a narrative “enables people to perceive new configurations between their experience and the sacred stories of their culture” thus allowing them to reorient themselves in their new context and cope with the changes that might be coming.⁹⁷ To understand God, we must understand ourselves through our lives, our experiences, and the stories that we tell, as well as through the memories of those who have come before us. When we tell their stories, we speak of their memories and allow their voices to continue to be heard. Others are able to hear the theology within the stories we tell. When we tell stories, we shine a light on the powers that bind and tie us down and we give voice to the powerless. Storytellers enable us to understand what God is doing or not doing when we are engaged in story theology and the funeral provides a helpful vehicle for this practice. Stories have multiple layers with many meanings and should not be taken literally. To faithfully engage in the stories of others, we must be able to imagine ourselves in their space so that we can relate to them. Finally, we must have imagination to be able to create new things or ideas

⁹⁶ Graham, Walton, and Ward, 49.

⁹⁷ Graham, Walton, and Ward, 63.

or to combine old ideas in new forms. I will address this further in chapter four, reflecting on stories and culture and in the funeral.

Conclusion

Weaving together the history of Taiwan, the history of the Taiwanese in the United States, and the role of the Taiwanese Presbyterian church, both in Taiwan and in the United States, I tell the story of how and why the Taiwanese people came to the United States and the importance of the church in their lives, and the impact that the Taiwanese American immigrant church has on this community and on the people within it. I have outlined the brutal Taiwanese history and how that has influenced immigration and impacted the churches both in Taiwan and in the US. This same brutal history led to immigration in large numbers to the United States, especially for the well-educated, who came here to study, to work, and to raise their families. Identity and the need for community were two reasons that Taiwanese American churches were established. The traditions of the Taiwanese Presbyterian Church, especially in their polity and leadership model, shaped the culture of the Taiwanese American churches and, in turn, affected the way that pastors might practice their care, with the congregation and of the people. I look at the importance of Taiwanese culture and stories as they relate to a distinctly Taiwanese theology that continues to be relevant to Taiwanese American Christians.

This chapter provides a backdrop for the story I will be telling in the next two chapters, about Taiwanese American Christians living in the United States and how they understand and receive pastoral care. These Christians have been influenced by Japanese cultural values of orderliness and stoicism; by their own self-determination and the pursuit of freedom and independence; by the way politics have played out; and by the central role played by the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. At the same time, the reformed tradition of the PCT and, by extension, these

same Christians and their churches, have all influenced the way pastoral care is practiced and received. In this research study, I am asking for and listening to the stories of Taiwanese American Presbyterian Christians through interviews, in addition to the observations I make as I participate with them in church worship and fellowship. I will be bearing witness to how people understand who they are as individuals and who they are as a community; who God is to them, what the church is, and what their responsibilities are to each other. Hearing their stories, what is both said and unsaid, I can better understand what kind of care and support they expect and what they might need. As they share their stories, I have been able to identify the kind of care they have received and how it was given; and the kind of care the pastors were trying to give based, not only on their experiences but also on the culture of the churches they have come to know. I now better understand their theology and how their faith helps them through the difficulties of life, along with the care provided by the church and its leadership.

Chapter Three

Methodology and Data: Formosa and Taiwan Churches

This dissertation is a practical theological project, which begins and ends with practice, and hopes to arrive at a conclusion that will have an impact on the understanding that can lead to positive changes. In this chapter, I address my method and methodology, go into detail about my study, the challenges that had to be overcome, and I share my data collection process and analysis. I introduce the churches that I interviewed, as well as each individual who was interviewed in each church, providing what anthropologist Clifford Geertz refers to as a “thick description” of each of the two churches. Additionally, I share my impressions and observations of events, both in the churches on Sundays and the memorial service. Coincidentally, during the time of my study, a death occurred in each church that participated in my study. I discuss the deceased in both churches, even though I did not attend both services, nor did I interview the families. I was able to understand the families and the funeral from the pastors’ perspective. Finally, in this chapter, I bring forth the stories of individuals and the churches, sharing with my readers the full context of these communities and introducing the interviewed members.

Practical Theology & Methodology

The goal of practical theology is to understand the unique challenges that Taiwanese American congregations face because of their diasporic existence; to illuminate congregational practices for further theological reflection in search of inherent, alternative wisdom; to understand how context shapes practice to articulate a faith that gives meaning to their experience. Theological reflection is needed to clarify the transnational identity and the theological, political, and ethical commitments of Taiwanese Americans and to understand how that context shapes who they are and

their needs. This process takes their personhood and community seriously. Practical theology provides guidelines for how to reflect deeply on one's lived experience and to use that insight to develop a theology that can then be applied to lived experiences. In my interviews of the pastors, I examined how pastors understand pastoral care and how they are able to meet the challenges that confront them in serving Taiwanese American congregations. Using their reflections, experiences, and stories, I bear witness to how they apply the action-reflection-action model of practical theology in unique ways. I reflect on the lived experience of the funeral as a way to understand the Taiwanese American Church and community, their grief, and their faith, taking into account where people came from and honoring their stories of the bereaved. My project explores the experience of grief and pastoral care that individuals encounter. I hope this study will help caregivers understand how Taiwanese people encounter God in their experiences, so they can help support the faithful in practical ways into a deeper faith experience and connection with their faith community.

As the field of practical theology has developed, its research and teaching have challenged both the "clerical and academic organization of theological education and [it has] developed a method of doing theology aimed at connecting Christian life and doctrine."⁹⁸ These sound, academically recognized methods of inquiry were developed in the attempt to transform theory into action, shaped both by the experience of faith and the tradition of the church, and then reapplied to create the hermeneutical circle of practice, followed by theory, followed by practice that is at the heart of practical theology. These methods give evidence and assist in interpretation because traditional theological studies do not provide much guidance in understanding the world as it exists. Therefore, practical theologians must find other sources to aid their research and reflection. These methods come from across the disciplines, especially the social sciences of psychology, sociology,

⁹⁸ Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, "Practical Theology," in *The New Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*, ed. Dawn DeVries and Brian Gerrish (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, forthcoming), 2.

education, anthropology, among others. Interdisciplinary methods can supply practical theologians with ways in which to engage the world, because “theological tradition does not in itself provide all the information about the modern world that is needed to have a good understanding of many issues.”⁹⁹ This means that practical theologians are able to selectively choose from other disciplines to develop a specialization to enhance understanding.

The practical theologian can reap the benefits of being able to borrow and learn from other disciplines, including sociology and psychology, and bringing together ideas to form a new practice. Practical theological methods include the hermeneutical, bibliographical, and empirical. The hermeneutical method is one of interpretation, studying situations where marginalization or oppression is taking place. The bibliographical method consults written texts, including Scriptures, scholarly writings, and other commentaries. The empirical includes methods such as quantitative research, narrative theory, case studies, and ethnography. These methods all help the practical theologian make theology relevant to contemporary concerns, addressing other contexts and peoples. Moreover, it is important for practical theology to engage marginalized voices, allowing for a broader understanding of God. Our experiences help us better understand God and our reflections on our lives provide a vehicle into reflection and theological construction. The voices heard here are individual and personal. In listening and valuing these stories, we are able to challenge the traditional Western narrative of the Scriptures to honor all experiences and include a broader understanding of God. The contribution of theological insights here comes from unexpected places, which are “woven into the canonical accounts to produce a richer tapestry of perspectives.”¹⁰⁰

Through the use of my research methods of implementing an ethnographic study of two Taiwanese American Presbyterian congregations, I have gained more insight into pastoral care in the Taiwanese

⁹⁹ James Woodward and Stephen Pattison, eds. *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 9.

¹⁰⁰ Graham, Walton, and Ward, 13.

American context, especially as I engage my results with the scholarly work that is in existence.

Through my study, I have learned about the churches, its pastors, as well as, about the people

Thus, the work of practical theology takes the life of the faithful into consideration. This is a corporate activity where the question is how the community of faith can generate “theological language in its life together”¹⁰¹ to find a new self-understanding. The individuals I interviewed do not see themselves living isolated from the community; rather, they place themselves in the midst of God’s greater story. In this way, the Gospel can find “expression across cultural differences of historical or geographical context.”¹⁰² The cultural, temporal, and spatial location of theology is related to the expression of the gospel within my community. Practical theology asks explicitly the question of how faith applies to the community at large and the role of culture in interpretative work in the everyday language of the community, which is the purpose and the call of ministry and how that practice can become theory, which is then used to change the practice. By looking at the experience of these few individuals who have gone through grief and how pastoral care impacted their lives and the work that the pastors are actively doing, I will gain insight into a holistic picture of what the community might need as a whole.

Ethnography & Framework

My empirical method is ethnography, based on the framework presented by Mary Clark Moschella. Ethnography is a way of learning something about a culture from people by “observing people’s actions and interactions and asking them to share their stories.”¹⁰³ It calls for immersing oneself into the “life of a people in order to learn something about and from them,”¹⁰⁴ so that one

¹⁰¹ Graham, Walton, and Ward, 14.

¹⁰² Graham, Walton, and Ward, 14.

¹⁰³ Mary Clark Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice: An Introduction* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2008), 4.

¹⁰⁴ Moschella, 4.

can better understand the way they live out their faith. Ethnography can be a tool of pastoral listening and care, drawing from a narrative model that emphasizes the importance of people's stories. Sharing and speaking these stories will lead to reflections and evaluations, which can "change our actions and attitudes and thereby begin to author –claim authority over– new, more intentional plotlines."¹⁰⁵ During my research, I listened to the stories that my interviewees chose to share with me, whether or not these stories directly related to funerals, bereavement, or death and dying. This open conversation allowed people to share stories of who they are and how they understand God working in their lives, giving me a more robust understanding of how they cope with loss and grief. At the same time, sharing stories can shape lives and give meaning and coherence. In the process of hearing their stories and conducting research, I reflected on the actions and experiences of my interviewees and offered recommendations.

Ethnographic research is qualitative research. A goal of this current ethnographic research method is to provide thick descriptions of a caregiving event and how the pastor, lay leaders, and a family that receives pastoral care at time of the funeral experience that event. Through my observations and interviews, I have been able to construct a meaningful narrative about Taiwanese American Christians and pastoral care and have learned how each person I interviewed connects his or her story with God's story. We all have stories, individually and collectively. These stories help us understand and shape our lives. Stories are "sacred, whether or not they are conventionally religious, and they have a deep resilience that ensures their endurance through time."¹⁰⁶ Stories help people cope and to receive encouragement during difficult times because narrative is a way of "structuring experience."¹⁰⁷ Stories help people to use the past to get to their future, being able to shift the narrative to think about who they are and the changes that they want to make. Stories help "define

¹⁰⁵ Moschella, 6.

¹⁰⁶ Graham, Walton, and Ward, 49.

¹⁰⁷ Graham, Walton, and Ward, 62.

where [people] have been and what they have done to produce who they are.”¹⁰⁸ Through these stories, I better understand their values and context have gained insight into their world. It is up to the church and pastors to “recognize and facilitate the intersections among these stories” so that those who grieve can find meaning in their losses and allow their lives to move on.¹⁰⁹ Mourners need to weave their stories into God’s story in the funeral services they put together. I will discuss this further in chapter four, as I interpret the data I have collected.

These parts of my research are based on Osmer’s four tasks of practical theology. Osmer points out the need to gather information to discern what is happening in a particular situation, to combine the observation with existing interdisciplinary theories in different fields to understand and explain these dynamics, and to interpret this information with theology as a necessary way to inform and guide our ministry, and finally to find strategies that will enter “into a reflective conversation with the ‘talk back’ emerging when they are enacted.”¹¹⁰ This framework utilizes the practical theological practice of an action-reflection-action model, where reflection upon action that is taken, and then actions taken again implement the changes based on the reflection. Ethnography offers a way to gather the information necessary in the descriptive-empirical task. In my closely related selections of psychotherapeutic literature, I outlined some of the important books that I used to interpret the result of my ethnography research. Through using Osmer’s framework, I provide a more systematic way of understanding certain aspects of pastoral care and how it is provided in different Taiwanese American churches, especially in relation to the funeral. I utilize sources from different fields, such as organizational culture, psychology, sociology, theology, and pastoral care to better understand pastoral care and funerals, as well as Taiwanese American Christians and their

¹⁰⁸ Halbur and Halbur, 75.

¹⁰⁹ Lee Franklin, *A Pastor’s Practical Guide to Funerals: Offering Help, Assurance, and Hope* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013), 1.

¹¹⁰ Osmer, 4.

culture. In the end, I hope to present some tangible ways that can help provide more successful pastoral care.

My Research Study

To begin, I contacted Rev. Mei-Hui Lai and requested the directory of churches that she compiles and updates annually. While there are more Taiwanese American churches in the Southern California region than in other areas in the United States, many of them did not have pastors. Out of the fourteen Taiwanese Presbyterian Churches (PCUSA) in Southern California, several either did not have pastors or had a temporary pastor. This included the two pastors with whom I spoke, one of whom was retiring without a replacement and the other was an interim pastor finishing up his contract by the end of the month. Even though they were both very willing to participate, my study was going to take a little longer than they would remain in their posts. That made it difficult for the interim pastor to speak in depth about the church, since he had not been at the church for very long. I called each of the several Taiwanese church to speak to their pastors about my project and to see whether their church might be interested and able to participate in my study. All the pastors I spoke with were willing to assist me in my project. Using ethnography, I was able to both observe and conduct research into two Taiwanese American churches to obtain a thick description of the churches and gain insights into how they function and how pastoral care is done.

Problems Encountered

There are always Taiwanese people retiring to Southern California, because it has great weather, a strong Taiwanese community, and is relatively close to Taiwan. One does not need to speak fluent English to be able to thrive in Southern California. There are many different Taiwanese American churches in Southern California, including the independent Evangelical Formosan churches, Taiwanese Presbyterian Churches as a part of the Presbyterian Church, USA (PCUSA),

non-denominational Taiwanese churches, and Mandarin-speaking “Chinese” churches that include a large number from Taiwan. As mentioned in chapter two, Taiwanese identity nuanced. For the purposes of my research, the population that I studied self-identified as Taiwanese. I am also focusing on Taiwanese American Churches whose founding members were part of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT), as this generally means that they are *benshenren*, and culturally Taiwanese rather than Chinese. When these immigrants came to the United States, many came to escape the political regime in Taiwan. This cultural connection also means that they started reformed tradition churches that eventually became connected to mainline Reformed Churches in the United States, primarily with the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Reformed Church in America (RCA) and in the world. Since Taiwanese American churches tend to be small with congregations of less than 100 members, very few occurrences of death were to be expected within the period I carried out my study. Furthermore, not every family who experienced loss was willing and able to speak with me. For example, did family fit within the criteria. The mother had died about a year before. In her last years, the son and his wife had taken care of her. Both the son and his wife agreed to speak with me about their experience. Our interview was delayed because of his scheduled surgery but he agreed to meet with me that was completed. Unfortunately, after his surgery, because of his now limited mobility, he moved into the downstairs bedroom which had been his mother’s bedroom. Inside that room, the memories of his mother came rushing back and he felt overwhelmed with emotion and did not feel comfortable speaking to me after all. Though he had initially thought that he had come to terms with his loss, his own health scare and living in his mother’s space made him aware that he required more time to grieve.

Another problem I encountered was that many Taiwanese American churches are not intergenerational. This means that even though members of the Taiwanese American churches may have family living in the area, they do not go to church with their families. Many second generation

do not feel connected to the Taiwanese American church, because they struggle with understanding the language, or with cultural differences, or because they live far from their parents' church. They may be too busy during the regular work week to drive out of their way to attend a Taiwanese church when a local church is nearby. With many Taiwanese American churches, when the members had young children, they might have brought their children to church. Once the children had become adults, they were likely to move on to different churches and establish their own faith lives and fellowship, especially if the Taiwanese American church did not have fellowship and worship in English. Because of the small size of many Taiwanese American Churches, it is also possible that young adults preferred a church with others in their age group. As some of these second-generation Taiwanese grow older, marry, and have children, it is possible that they will prefer to attend churches that speak Mandarin, because many believe it is more useful for children to learn Mandarin than Taiwanese. This means that while the deceased may have been a member of the church, the family members were not.

Therefore, even if the pastor and the church had provided important pastoral care to the deceased, the family may not be aware of the role played by the pastor or the church. This also means that, if the family has its own pastor or the family does not know the church's pastor well enough, the pastor may not have been involved in planning the funeral. This happened with the pastor of the Taiwanese Presbyterian Church near a large senior community whose membership comprises a large number of Taiwanese American retirees from all over the United States who had moved into this community after retirement. Because of this aging population, this church suffers multiple losses every year. Unfortunately, because they live in a senior community, they tended not to have children in the congregation. Thus, I was not able to find anyone to interview. The pastor of this church mentioned that when one of the members of his congregation died, the children of that member chose to hold the funeral at their own church and only provided an invitation to the

members of the member's church to attend. The pastor was invited to participate in the funeral, but only to say a prayer. He did not assist the family in pastoral support or in planning the funeral in any way. Once the funeral was over, the children went back to their own church and no follow up was needed or done. There was no one in the family left in the congregation who met my criteria for the interview. Finally, if the children do not live near their parents and no other family members live in the area, elderly individuals who have lost their spouses may be forced to move. They may move in with their children or move away completely to be closer to other family members, rather than live alone. In one church I contacted, while two families met my criteria, neither family remained with the church after the deaths of their loved ones. One widow moved in with her children in another area and the other widow decided to move overseas, where she had family.

Thus, I had hoped to find in one church two families who had suffered a loss within the last 6 to 12 months—ideally of an elderly person who had been chronically ill so that the death was not unexpected. However, in the real-life situations I encountered, that did not happen. I consulted with Dr. K. Samuel Lee, my advisor, and decided to expand my research to include two churches, interviewing the pastors of the church and one family who had suffered a loss in the church, regardless of when they suffered the loss. I had also planned on interviewing any caring elders or additional persons who provided pastoral care in the church. However, in the end, I did not interview lay leaders. While one church had an official caring elder, with all the other elders rotating to be on duty on a monthly basis, the bulk of the pastoral care was provided by the pastor and he reached out to all the elders with the same frequency, without expecting the caring elder to do more simply because that was the title given. The other church did not have any formal, organized pastoral care team, nor was there an elder who was tasked with being the caring elder in the congregation. Therefore, I did not think it was necessary to interview the lay leaders in the church.

Sites: Seeking Two Congregations

I found two churches that met my new criteria in Southern California. I called the first church “Formosa Church” and the second one I named “Taiwan Church.” Both of these churches have a current pastor and one person who was willing to speak with me about their experience of the loss of a loved one. Coincidentally, both churches had lost a member who was receiving ongoing care during the time I was doing my research. Both pastors were involved in the funerals and both families remained in the church after the deaths. Even though I did not ask to speak with the families about the death and the funeral because the loss was so recent, I was able to speak with both pastors about the deceased, and with their families, and through those conversations I gained some insight into the family dynamics, and the perspective and care of the pastors as they navigated the losses. Furthermore, I was able to attend the memorial service at Formosa Church, since it was an open event, where the information about the memorial service was listed in the bulletin. This meant that, presumably, the entire congregation was invited to attend. On the other hand, the funeral of the member at Taiwan Church was a closed event and they did not allow anyone other than the pastor and the family to attend.

Formosa Church

The first church in which I did my field work is among the older Taiwanese American Churches in the United States. It has been in the same area since the earlier days of Taiwanese immigration. This church was among those that came together organically, whose members came to worship together and were eventually able to establish this as a church in the 1970s, though it had begun as an informal fellowship several years before that. The congregation, once it gained more members, called a pastor to lead the church and to perform the tasks of a pastor, teaching, preaching, and blessing the Sacraments. Over the decades of its history, the church has had a

number of pastors at the helm but had also had some years where the pastorate was vacant. Currently, two pastors serve the church: one for the English ministry and another for the Taiwanese ministry. The Mandarin-speaking fellowship falls under the purview of the Taiwanese ministry, which assists with worship on Sundays. Mandarin-speaking fellowship was started for the newer, younger immigrants and international students who grew up in Taiwan and who feel more comfortable speaking Mandarin than either Taiwanese or English. Joint worship services are held with both the Taiwanese group and with the English group on a monthly basis. This is a commuter church, where most members come from other communities in the region, rather than a local parish where the congregation lives nearby. According to their pastor, only a handful of members live in the area, because of the availability of senior apartments there. According to the pastor, most are long-time members who have attended this church for many years and do not live anywhere near the church, or each other.

Like any other church fellowship groups at Formosa church are officially organized by the church to provide times when members can meet outside of worship service on days other than Sundays. These groups provide evidence that this church trended toward a more elderly and scattered population: three groups that meet once a month and are organized based on location: one each for “southern,” “eastern,” and “western” areas. Meetings are all scheduled for weekday mornings. Theoretically, members can attend multiple groups should they choose to do so, since each group is scheduled to meet at a different time, although locations may be too far for some members to travel. A weekly Bible study is held on Wednesdays at the church, also in the morning. That regular programming is scheduled on weekday mornings indicates that the church is focused primarily on those who are retired or who do not work. Additionally, once a month, a young professionals gathering is held, which uses Mandarin and takes place on Saturday mornings. The church holds services in three languages: English, Mandarin, and Taiwanese. There are other formal

groups at the church such as the elders' group also called "Evergreen," the women's group, the choir, and the handbell group. These groups have different meeting times, some are more regular than others.

On the church website, the Evergreen fellowship group has its monthly meetings listed for the entire year and naming the topic or activity for each meeting. This fellowship is comprised of the elderly members in the church, those who are retired and have the free time to gather together. This group is often able to offer home visits to church members, though this is not an explicit mission of the group. Rather, this is more of a group of friends from the church that gets together for community building and spiritual growth, participating in activities with each other that they may not be able to do with their busy children and their families. Therefore, some months the activity will be a lecture; others will be an activity or outing; still others will be Bible study. A planning committee of at least six people is in charge of hosting the fellowship. Membership on that committee rotates throughout the year. While the Evergreen fellowship is for the more elderly members who meet only once a month, this group will sometimes plan get-togethers to offer informal care for the congregation. They will find a time that works for everyone so that they can schedule a visit with the infirm. The group meets at church and organizes a car pool for these visits. This is not a requirement and not every member of the fellowship will attend every visit. They will visit members of their group but also members of the church in general.

Formosa Church has a congregational meeting once every three months to decide on church business. In the time between, the elders will get together once a month for their meeting. While the deacons are also supposed to meet regularly, their meetings are more infrequent. In the past, they have not met very often, but these meetings have become a more regular occurrence since the current pastor came and insisted that the deacons have more regular meetings so that they can better understand the needs of the church. This church has six elders, one of which is the official caring

elder. Each of the elders becomes the “elder on duty” on a rotating basis. Each church elder, then, serves two times a year as the “on-call” person whose information is written on the bulletin for people to contact. People have the option of contacting the elder on duty or the pastor when they need further support. Because Formosa Church has had periods of time between pastors, this set up allows for the congregation to continue to function pastorally even without the pastor role being filled. I call the pastor of this church “Peter.” Pastor Peter’s practice here is to inform the elders about care needs in the church and he encourages them to participate in services to provide pastoral care and lay leadership. This is not a requirement, however, so most of the day-to-day, individual care seems to be done by the pastor. The pastor does stay in touch with the elders and asks them to assist him with administrative tasks such as contacting the lay leadership with news and updates and organizing schedules. These tasks tend to be more flexible and can be done anywhere so it does not require their physical presence.

Taiwan Church

My second church is also in Southern California, almost an hour and a half away from the first church. Taiwan Church was established by a pastor, in the 1980s after this area, which had once been farmland, experienced rapid growth, especially among new immigrants. This church was established when a PCUSA Taiwanese American pastor from another part of the country decided to retire to Southern California. He saw many Taiwanese people in the neighborhood but realized there were no Taiwanese American churches. The closest Taiwanese American church was about forty-or-more minutes away, depending on traffic. He decided that he would do a church plant and establish Taiwan Church.¹¹¹ Before the founding pastor retired, he personally chose his successor, whom I call Pastor James, who began working with him a year before he retired. Once the founding pastor

¹¹¹ This history was told to me by Pastor James.

retired, Pastor James transitioned into the solo pastor role in the church while the founding pastor left the church completely so that Taiwan Church would truly become Pastor James' church. While Taiwan Church remains a church in the reformed tradition with heavy input from the congregation and lay leadership, Taiwan Church has never gone without a pastor at the helm, and the pastor has more autonomy to make decisions.

As a result of the way that Taiwan Church was formed, Taiwan Church is not just an affinity church that draws Taiwanese people, but it is also a community church, where the members live close to the church. Pastor James estimates that "90% of the member live near the church." To him, this meant that the church did not have to try so hard to create a community, but that they could just be a community. In his opinion, other Taiwanese churches are "more competing [with] each other. They have more Taiwanese style that we don't have." For Pastor James, this means that Taiwan Church is not engaging in Taiwanese political events or holding concerts. Instead, the activities of the church are more informal and casual, such as picnics in the park and day trips.

Moreover, because Taiwan Church is a community church, their members are not limited to only Taiwanese people. According to Pastor James, the members of Taiwan Church is

like a mix. It's majority Taiwanese, but they are more open to other races, including Filipinos or Hong Kong or whoever likes this culture, they are welcome. Of course, whoever doesn't like this culture... we have about 5 mainland Chinese. They don't understand at all, but they like the community. They like the gathering and the friendly environment, so they come here. They wanted to join us and that's OK.

For these non-Taiwanese members, who come for the community of the church, the church has someone translating into Mandarin and it prints out the sermons so that people can follow along. The greeter, whose job it is on Sundays to help visitors feel welcome, was very exuberant. She brought me the sermon translated into Mandarin, worried that I would not be able to understand the sermon that was given in Taiwanese. For those she thought would not understand Taiwanese or read Chinese, she would bring the Bible and hymnal in English, thinking that English might be

easier. The greeter also hands the visitor a form that asks for a name, address, and phone number, which is given to the liturgist so that introductions can be made during the announcement portion of the service. On this form, a section asks for personal needs to be identified, presumably, so help can be given. This is a generous gesture, acknowledging that people may come to church because they are in need. but welcoming them nonetheless.

This church also has fellowship during the week day, indicating that the expected participants are elderly and retired or do not work. Said Pastor James about Taiwan Church:

We'll say, oh, we'll go to the park across the street and we can go for a walk or we can have a picnic or BBQ or look at the ducks. Or we can go to Olive Garden—there's an Olive Garden here—and we will just invite the church and we will go. So, it's more community. Some people will go hiking or whatever—this is more community life centered... type. I think there are very few Taiwanese churches are community based, so this is the good part.

Pastor James recognized that for the majority of his elderly members, this church is the only community they have outside of family, so they truly appreciate it. With this responsibility, comes an intentionality for the care of these members for whom Taiwan Church is family. When things happen to people, it is not only the leadership of the church that responds. Pastor James will reach out to those who he knows are close to the person who is struggling and inform any well-meaning member who approaches him to offer their assistance on how to help.

Taiwan church does not have any formal congregational care groups, nor is there an elder responsible for pastoral care. Pastor James provides the bulk of the pastoral care to the congregation. However, he does delegate to the laity and invite them to participate based on his experience and understanding of the congregation, the family, and the needs. For example, if there is someone who needs care, Pastor James will think about who might be best suited to offer support and will request and instruct those people to step up. At the same time, Pastor James takes confidentiality very seriously and will be sure to maintain it. Like Formosa Church, there is an elder fellowship group that visits the sick once a year in the nursing homes. The pastor at this church has

spent over a decade at this church and I will call him “James.” Since Taiwan Church is more community based, a gathering takes place at the church a few days a week. Pastor James also goes to work in his office, rather than working from home, except when he has his sabbath, which is on Mondays. He has a firm boundary for his Sabbath and takes that day off very seriously.

Like Formosa Church and all other Taiwanese American Churches, Taiwan Church also has a lunch fellowship after worship on Sundays. While they may not serve as much food as Formosa Church, they, too, have plenty to eat. As a community church, people sometimes bring items to share and support each other’s hobbies. The first time I attended Taiwan Church, they celebrated Lunar New Years. Members of the congregation brought dishes of food, so that it was a pot luck instead of a church-ordered lunch. A lot of hot pot ingredients tend to be frozen, so it is also a sign that people do not live far away, if they can bring frozen items to church without worrying about the temperature. During another luncheon visit, someone came around asking for my scraps, after I was done eating. Someone at my table clarified that this woman was a very good gardener and she always asked for the scraps to take home as compost for her garden. Additionally, someone brought vegetables from her garden to sell to other members. I was told that this is a frequent occurrence at this church; people help each other out and get home grown or home-made food in the process. They are able to do this because the close proximity of their church to their home allows for the ability to bring in goods. For Taiwan Church, Sunday School does not occur every week. Since they have activities all week long, including Bible Study twice a week, prayer group, elder fellowship group, and Sunday worship, they have Sunday School every other week. This decision was made because some people wanted Sunday School, but others wanted more fellowship time. In the end, they made a compromise, though by no means is Sunday School mandatory. People were free to come and go as they chose; the Sunday School participation was much lower than the total number of people attending church.

Participant Observation at the Churches

I visited both churches multiple times, but was unable to attend any fellowship, since they met during weekday mornings, when I was at work. I attended the worship service, Sunday School, and the fellowship lunch. Both churches are small, about 60 members, which seems to be average for a Taiwanese church. Sundays generally include worship, and lunch, along with other activities. For both churches, Sunday services start early in the morning and last until early afternoon. People tend to stay at least an hour for lunch. Because Taiwan Church is a more community-oriented church, members seem to stay much longer than their Formosa counterparts. Perhaps because they live closer together they do not need to plan 2 hours of round-trip travel time, so they have more time to spend in church. The liturgies of the churches were very similar to each other, utilizing a fairly traditional Taiwanese Presbyterian liturgy. Both churches made announcements during the service where they introduced visitors. During this time, both Pastor James and Pastor Peter introduced me and my project to the congregation. The congregation was very open and friendly, inviting me to stay and enjoy lunch. They also extended an invitation to me to return to the church more frequently, to consider becoming a regular member of the church. The time to announce visitors is also a time the churches will reintroduce someone who has been away for a while, sharing with the congregation what they have been doing. I attended both churches intermittently because my study included two churches, I was introduced several times. This announcement time is a time for pastoral care as well. When there is an announcement about illness, the pastors will invite the congregation to offer prayer for the person and their families. Moreover, at Taiwan Church, Pastor James announced the return of a member who had been unable to attend church for several weeks due to surgery and recovery. At Formosa Church, the liturgist, also a doctor, spoke about a member

of the congregation who had suffered an illness and he educated the congregation about symptoms and implications of the illness.

Artifacts

The most helpful artifact I found turned out to be the bulletin. That document gave me a wealth of information on pastoral care and the church community. It shared important information about fellow members, both the good and the sad, and allowed for the whole church to celebrate and grieve with and offer support to the members listed. The bulletin included prayer requests for members going through difficult times, mostly having to do with their health or the health of their families. Announcements are made of happy events, such as weddings and births and a section that celebrates birthdays. Further, the bulletins contain other information worth noting, such as fellowship groups and meeting times and church gatherings, retreats and memorial services. They name the leaders for the current and following weeks and share attendance and donations from the previous week. Likewise, the funeral bulletin provided a lot of information. To me the bulletin for the funeral seemed straightforward, until Pastor Peter explained the complicated family dynamics. He was able to navigate those dynamics to bring about a moving funeral. The family was able to present a united front to mourn their mother and Pastor Peter was able to make that happen. After learning about the family drama, I went back to read the bulletin again and was able to see how Pastor Peter had navigated the family's feelings and helped them to honor the deceased.

Another helpful resource was the websites of both churches. A website tells a lot about the culture of a place, and I found that especially true for the websites of these Taiwanese American churches. The language, the mission statement, and what kind of information is included tell the viewer what is important to the church and who the target audience is. Formosa Church, for

example, utilizes both English and Chinese.¹¹² Their home page's welcome statement is entirely in English. When I consulted the website for Formosa Church, I found that it outlined the various fellowship groups, including their activities and the contact information in both English and Chinese. This allows people who don't read Chinese to have easier access to Formosa Church. Additionally, Formosa Church has a Facebook page, which Taiwan Church does not. For Taiwan Church, the website is mainly in Chinese, with little English. Their welcome page, mission statement and statement of faith are all in Chinese. It is possible that, as a community-based church, and because Taiwan Church does a lot of its work in the local neighborhoods, new members are brought in through word of mouth and the church's regular activities rather than through the internet.

The relationships between the Taiwanese Presbyterian Churches are positive ones; these pastors get together to have retreats and there is an overarching organization of Taiwanese Presbyterian Churches (TPC) of Southern California that both churches belong to. The TPC of Southern California has planned retreats that both churches encourage their members to participate in, as well as senior activities several times a year across all the churches. Every year, the Taiwanese Presbyterian Churches in the region offer a joint retreat in the summer. Both churches encouraged their members to attend. Pricing for the retreat is different for each church, because the churches subsidize different amounts to make it possible for their members to attend. There is also one Sunday each year where all the TPC pastors swap pulpits, each preaching at a different church.

Data Collection

¹¹² While Taiwanese language can be written, most people do not use it. The written language only came into existence when the missionaries came and translated into Taiwanese using Romanized lettering. In the last two decades, there has been more work on finding a way to write Taiwanese, but for the most part it is only used in the Taiwanese hymnals and Bibles. On the bulletins and websites, and even the PowerPoint of the Sunday order of worship is written in Chinese.

After my initial contact with the pastors and had made observations of both congregations by attending the churches on Sunday for worship, both pastors had already asked if any members would be willing to participate in my project. The pastors were able to introduce me individually to those who had volunteered, so that I could set up an interview time and place with my interviewees during the fellowship hour after worship. Since the pastors had already cleared the interviews with them, I did not have to worry that these people would refuse to meet with me. I asked each person for an interview of at least one and no more than two hours. The interviews were semi-structured; I prepared a set of open-ended questions that served as a guideline for the interviews (see Appendix A and B) and left space for organic and authentic conversation and storytelling to be directed by my interviewee. I wanted to follow their lead as they shared their stories.

Before we started, I asked for permission to record the interviews so that I would be able to transcribe the interviews. I let them know that if they were interested in hearing or reading my transcriptions, I would be more than happy to provide a copy for them. None of those whom I interviewed made this request. For the interviews of family members, I started by getting their story of their loss, and then asking about the death and then the funeral. I asked them about their experience with the funeral itself, including all the participants and the liturgy. I asked them their thoughts of pastoral care, including their understanding of it and their expectations of care. I asked them their opinion on what happened during the funeral and how they felt about it; who was helpful, what was helpful. When I spoke with the pastor and lay leaders, I asked questions about their preparation and training. I asked how they understand pastoral care and what the challenges have been. Through their answers to the questions, I hoped to better understand how they see their roles in providing pastoral care and how they understand and practice pastoral care. After I finished the interviews, I wrote down reflections of my own experience in my researcher's journal.

All the interviews were audio-recorded with a hand-held recorder. The interviews were transcribed and translated for analysis. Interviews were conducted with a mix of Taiwanese, Chinese, and English. For the most part, everyone I interviewed preferred to speak in Taiwanese. Each initial interview lasted about 60 to 100 minutes. I did not schedule interviews closely together so that I would have enough time for an organic conversation and time to reflect on the interviews afterwards. I spent time mentally and emotionally processing the materials after the interview to give each interview the attention that the stories and experiences deserve. I needed to solicit a follow up interview with only one person; the pastor of Formosa Church, because in our first interview I had not spoken to him about the funeral he had conducted. I was able to conduct a follow up interview at the church on the Sunday after the funeral had taken place. I had prepared an additional set of open-ended questions, mostly about his role in the funeral and what he felt the family needed. I also requested copies of the sermon from the pastor, which he emailed me later. I was able to record my initial reflections, questions, hunches, and theories, and evaluate my questions and protocols.

Since I had recorded the interviews, I did not try to write down everything that was said. Instead, I took some notes that I thought in the moment were important and surprising and I recorded my observations of the emotions, body language, and facial expressions. I transcribed each interview immediately after it ended and analyzed the data while the conversations were still fresh in my mind. When transcribing the interview, I had a second chance to go over all the questions and answers again, to pick up things that I missed the first time around and compared it with the notes that I had taken. I had left some notes directly on the sections in the Word document I used to transcribe the interview, using the comment function. In particular, I added observations that I made when I was visiting the churches to help me organize what I had seen and what my interviewees had said.

Data Analysis and Coding

I then moved on to analyze the data I gathered from my participant observation, my research journal, and my transcriptions. I began the analysis by printing out onto paper all the data that I had available and picking up on common phrases, feelings, and thoughts in what Moschella calls the “immersion process.”¹¹³ I read carefully through the material and found similarities in what different persons had said. I did some free writing about my impressions and observations of the artifacts that I gathered. Where I wrote down my thoughts and reflections, I made different columns available to take not only descriptive notes, but also my personal responses as well. I started to understand better about pastoral care in Taiwanese American churches during funerals I printed out all that I had written down leaving large margins, so I could add hand-written notes. Lastly, I read the material while remembering what I was doing and feeling, concentrating on my “own comments and influence in the interviews,”¹¹⁴ so that my responses became a part of my research. These themes became the key to coming up with a fuller understanding of what happens in the funeral that is experienced as helpful pastoral care.

Next, I did some precoding, circling and underlining words or themes that jumped out as me as important. I read the interviews several times, as well as my comments, attending first to their literal responses to the questions and then taking note of any themes. I created categories to organize my data using colored highlighters and utilized these similarities to better understand pastoral care and funerals, thus noting several themes that narrowed down my data. At first, I thought there were three distinct categories: relationships, pastoral experience and the funeral, and narratives and stories. Under the category of relationships, people had spoken about four different types: their relationship with God, with their pastors, with their church members and friends, and

¹¹³ Moschella, 168-169.

¹¹⁴ Moschella, 172-173.

with the church. However, these were not unique categories. Upon further reflection, I found that the common theme in all these relationships was how challenging it is to build them. I found themes of barriers to relationships, especially in people's relationship with God and their desire for privacy and saving face, but also different ways that the pastors were able to overcome these challenges. Further, it was because of the pastor's desire to connect with the people to whom they minister that their ministries were so flexible and individual, allowing the pastor to be present to each member and to meet their needs. Finally, through the stories the pastors tell, I can see how they have reflected on the culture of the churches in order to best direct their lay leadership to provide care to the members.

I created the categories that included barriers to relationships, building relationships, narrative/stories, and pastoral experiences. I cut and pasted all my highlights into a word document based on the theme. I continued to do subcoding that narrowed down my themes further so that I could do more analysis of the content using structural coding. I repeated what I had done previously and, under each theme, looked for further themes. I was able to find a few common threads revealing that relationships and the need to build them are the most critical aspect of providing good pastoral care. I further found that pastoral experiences were key in breaking down resistance to relationships, including building trust, offering authentic, compassionate care, and understanding the culture of the church. I address the interpretation of my data in the next chapter.

I recognize that I brought my own interpretation and context to this project; to everything that I observed and placed a meaning on, as well as to what I heard in the interviews. Therefore, while doing the work of interpretation, I was intentionally reflexive, paying attention to how I felt and why I interpreted the information the way I did. I continued to be reflexive when I was coding the material and when I started to write. I noted my reflections in my research journal, but also did some free writing after I finished transcribing each interview. When I started doing my coding and

analysis, my reflections were handwritten on the margins. I was able to discover deeper connections in each stage of my research each time I returned to my data and engaged it. I continued to work analytically with the materials even while writing. I was challenged to do theological reflection in regard to the spiritual or theological themes that might come up or be implied and how that might impact pastoral practice of care during the funeral. I had to contemplate the implications of my research regarding the wisdom or insights it offered about funerals and care. I was able to reflect back on the scholarly research that I had done and make connections between theory and practice. While the pastors and the bereaved that I interviewed did not explicitly speak about their experience theoretically or theologically, I was able to see more explicitly how they lived out their faith.

Findings: Formosa Church

Pastor Peter was very supportive of my project, offering what assistance he could. Taiwanese immigrant churches share the same practice of introducing visitors and perhaps old friends who have been absent a long time during the announcement portion of the service. During this time, Pastor Peter stood up and formally introduced me and my project to the congregation, inviting them to speak with me if they were comfortable. Because of this introduction and because of the friendliness of Taiwanese Churches, many people happily came to sit with me and talk to me about their lives, their experience, and this church. By the time I arrived at Formosa Church for my participant observation, Pastor Peter had already vetted the congregation and received confirmation that there was a member in the congregation willing to speak with me. After the worship ended, he introduced to me the member, whom I call “Esther” in my project. He was also apologetic that there was no other person who would be able to help me with my project, but he was very open when it came to the funeral that took place during the time, I was doing my research study. He

emailed me all the work that he had done, including his sermon, and invited me to observe the funeral service itself.

“Pastor Peter”

Pastor Peter, the solo pastor of this church, is an experienced pastor who has done ministry in both Taiwan and in the United States. He has been at this church for over five years now. He has had experience in multiple churches, serving in different ministerial roles throughout his years of ministry. Pastor Peter lives about an hour away from the church. At first, contacting Pastor Peter proved to be a bit of a challenge. Since Formosa Church is not a local church and the pastor lives about an hour away, he does not hold regular office hours. Formosa Church also did not have a secretary. While it did have a phone number, calling the church office did not guarantee that I would reach anyone, since the church did not have many activities during the week. It was only after I spoke to a mutual friend who reached out to Pastor Peter, gave me his number, and contacted Pastor Peter on my behalf to ask him to expect my phone call that I was finally able to reach him. However, once I had his contact information, Pastor Peter was very easy to contact, responding to emails and answering phone calls quickly.

Pastor Peter and I communicated primarily by email to set up a time to meet. He was very flexible and said that I could do it at any time, as he did not routinely assign his personal sabbath to a particular day. He was flexible with his time and care for the church as well, always ready to be present to anyone who needed his assistance. Pastor Peter was happy to meet my schedule and invited me to go to his home to do the interview, where both he and his wife were present. His home had a fairly open floor plan, with a large dining room and living room combined. There was a desk in the room as well as a dining table, where Pastor Peter's wife was busy with her own work. Pastor's wife is not ordained and not hired by the church for ministry yet is nonetheless an important part of his ministry. She assists him in visiting families, building relationships with

members, and offering care and support. He acknowledges the help that she gives him and how her presence allows him to do better ministry. She did not participate in the interview but was present throughout. At one point during our interview, the phone rang. An elder of the church had called. Pastor Peter calmly handed the cell phone to his wife and she answered the phone and addressed the call. She took care of the issue and he did not end up returning the call after our interview was over. Even though she is not an ordained minister and they do not co-pastor, she is nonetheless a leadership presence in the church and is a colleague of the pastor to the church. After the interview was over, they invited me to have lunch with them at a restaurant, during which time we talked and got to know each other better.

Pastor Peter has served in many capacities, including pastoring in both Taiwan and the United States. He has also served in non-church roles, working with a denominational body, which was why he was sent to the United States. He has also had experience working with multiple denominations besides the PCUSA and the PCT. This means that he is ecumenically minded and has observed different ways of practicing and observing our faith and rituals. In the interview with Pastor Peter, he shared many stories of his experiences that led him to think and to give the care in the way he does. He is very intentional about pastoral care, always observing how things are going, reflecting on his observations of events, how others are doing or have done pastoral care, trying his best to build relationships and understand the broader issues with which people struggle. He is reflexive about his own experiences and stories, as well as Biblical narratives and stories to help lead and guide the congregation on various issues. During Sunday worship, he had brought up stories of his own experience to help the congregation understand the greater story of God's presence in our lives. Since he has had multiple types of ministerial work, Pastor Peter was able to compare and contrast these experiences, as well as learn from them to provide authentic pastoral care.

How He Got Here: Experience and Goals

Pastor Peter has utilized his pastoral training, experience, and skills to help create a funeral service that is helpful to the family and sometimes to the church as well. In his experience, regardless of whether he is at a funeral or a wedding, he is always thinking about ways that he can honor the families and give them the most care. He spoke about the examples he had seen in the beginning of his ministry, where pastors were present and then left after the service.

When I started my ministry, after the [funeral] service is over, I started hanging back to observe the family. I feel that leaving at the end is more stable. It is good to wait until the end when everyone else leaves. When you talk to them at that time, they will feel very calm. It's a good feeling. The end feels empty. I don't know if you feel this way, like if you go to a birthday party and after everyone leaves, you see the mess left behind and the dishes left, you feel empty. The same thing, after the viewing, the families need something more. They need something to tell them this is the end. You don't want to leave them with an emptiness with the empty room. This is something I developed after I observed.¹¹⁵

Making this observation and reflecting on the way that other events took place helped Pastor Peter remember that care is necessary not only during the difficult times in life, but also in the good times. Moreover, sadness and instability can occur in what people think are happy occasions as well. Pastor Peter reflected on happy occasions, including birthdays and weddings, to be aware of moments of grief in those events as well. Pastor Peter carefully developed his practice of pastoral care to meet the human need for support, especially before and after deaths occurred. Through his constant evaluation and reevaluation, Pastor Peter has honed his pastoral care skills so that he can provide appropriate pastoral care for his members. He took time to reflect on what care means to individuals and the best way it can be given, rather than just follow the pattern of what had always been done. As time went on, he felt that it was not helpful to the family to leave right after the funeral service.

To truly offer effective pastoral care, Pastor Peter says it is important to build relationships with his members before a crisis comes, so that, in their time of need, he is able to truly be present

¹¹⁵ When I quote from my interviews, I will use a block quotation, unless the quote is short and I will italicize to distinguish from the quotes I cite from written sources.

to them. When reflecting on his goal of pastoral care, he said he wants to comfort people, but also wants to remind people that “our lives are in the hands of God. I feel that as people, we should always be ready when God calls us home.” Further, “I want people to have a Christian understanding of life and death. Any time is good. Any time God takes us is a blessing. God calling us is the biggest hope and blessing for any person.” When he thought back on the care that he gave to Mei’s family, he not only offered his presence, but also his prayers. As soon as he heard the news that she had died, he went to the nursing facility and offered comfort to the family through his prayer and presence. When he was helping the family with the funeral planning and services, he made sure to lift up God as “the ultimate leader of our lives.” During this time, he shared a “testimony of how God took care of this family. where she should have been suffering [with a lot of cancer-related pain], she was not.” Keeping God in the forefront is not only his work, but a message of comfort that he feels people need in their time of grief.

Additionally, Pastor Peter recognizes that not every member has the ability to attend church every week because of work or age. He makes an effort to follow up with those people who are not able to come to church regularly on Sundays to help them feel connected to the congregation and to keep the congregation connected to them. He will continue to support people who are absent, and should anything happen, he will inform the elders for further support. Pastor Peter ultimately sees his pastoral care role as one that lets the families know that he is available, so that “in case something actually happens, they will come to me.”

Pastor Peter and the Elders

At Formosa Church, the elders have a very active and consistent role in the life and leadership of the church. Because of this, Pastor Peter has continued the tradition of mobilizing the elders. On the day that he learned about Mei’s death, Pastor Peter decided not to ask any of the

elders to do any visits, but to “keep the family in prayer, because “you have to keep in mind the difficulties of the realities of the elders.” He decided that he would be “the representative and [he would] go.” In this way, Pastor Peter and the Formosa Church are both involved in a partnership of care. For Pastor Peter, it is important that the congregation understands that the work of care is done by the entirety of the lay leadership. Even in the more private services, like the funeral, he will assert his pastoral authority and insist on inviting the elders of the church to participate. He also informs the elders right away when someone has died, so that they are able to pray and provide any logistical support. Pastor Peter involves all his elders, calling to inform them, asking for prayers, and he asserts his authority by letting the family know that even during the more private events, elders should be invited. In response, the elders also take their ministry very seriously and attempt to follow through on showing up for families. Those who were able did attend the funeral as a representative of Formosan Church.

Funeral Experience: Mei’s Family

Pastor Peter and his wife had been conducting regular, weekly home visits to Mei’s family as she became sicker, to offer support for her and her family. “You have to let them know that you are stable and if things happen, they have someone they can turn to,” he said. He further recognizes the importance of consistent presence, not just at church, but also at home. Pastor Peter keeps his eyes and ears open when pastoral care needs are brought up, emphasizing that pastoral care is not simply about the individual, but about the whole family. He says that he has “to pay special attention when they are sick, especially if they are in the hospital.” But this does not always translate to the family having open arms for his presence. Because he has experienced the hesitation people have about opening their homes, Pastor Peter developed a particular way of approaching pastoral care that propels him to push a little more than he otherwise would to enter into the space of the family

in order to support them. This means that he is comfortable visiting people even when they may want to decline his offer. When he recognized that Mei was sick, he inserted himself into the family to offer support.

I'm the pastor, so I'm going to assert my pastoral authority and visit. So my wife and I went every week to visit [Mei's family]. As this happened, their shield went down and I began to grow the relationship with the family. So now, they are much more willing to speak to me about all kinds of issues. In the midst of the visiting of the sick person, I am also caring for their family members as well. We can gain better understanding into them.

Because of his intentionality in building this connection, Pastor Peter was the first person the family called when they found that Mei had died.

Using his experience with funerals and with people, Pastor Peter sometimes has to guide families that are in mourning. Dealing with the mortuary and making the funeral and burial arrangements can be a burden on the families. Pastor Peter reflected on Mei's death and guiding the family through the planning:

For this family, they did not know what to do. They have to work so there isn't a lot of time thinking about what to do. When they were planning the memorial, they called to ask if the church had time. But I told them they needed to get in touch with the mortuary first. Yesterday, they called and talked about being disappointed at Rose Hills. I asked them why. They said on Saturday, the price is 3x as much! I told them it is a business. You have to have this concept so if you are flexible, you don't need to fight others for the weekend. America is like this. It is a business. I told them look at your schedule, look at your finances, organize things according to that. So they didn't know these things. So you have to guide them more. You have to help them solve practical issues first before you can come back to do other things.

This is a kind of guidance that is not directly related to the pastoral task, but in offering such assistance, Pastor Peter was offering his solidarity with the family by being with them through a difficult time.

Further, Pastor Peter recognizes that there are many instances where funeral planning can lead to conflicts, especially as there are generational and cultural differences in families. There can be a clash between traditional Chinese beliefs and Western Christianity. He is sometimes caught in the middle, but he tries his best to be an impartial third party who is there to assist the family in

resolving their disagreement. Pastor Peter, having had a lot of experience in both Taiwan and the United States, has reflected on his observation to figure out what works for him, especially in regard to the funeral. One conflict that arose with Mei's daughter-in-law and her mother over putting shoes on Mei:

Her mother had told her that [the deceased] has to wear shoes. I knew what she meant: that she had to wear shoes because that will help her walk better to leave the world. This is an old concept in Taiwan. So I said, you can certainly put shoes on for her if you want. You have to be very careful with your words. So I said it was okay, but the best thing to do would be to wear shoes with no rubber, because she is getting cremated. Of course, this is just a local way of talking about this issue to make sure that she doesn't wear shoes, as the daughter does not want mom to wear shoes. This is a pastoral care issue because there is a conflict in the family and I was able to help them resolve their issues. So I said it was ok to wear shoes as long as the shoes don't have rubber.

By understanding the situation because he has had experience with funeral practices in Taiwan, being a non-judgmental presence, and coming up with a creative solution, he was able to satisfy both the daughter-in-law and her mother and allow the funeral process to continue on without this particular conflict.

On the day that Mei passed away, Pastor Peter was there to comfort the family, but also to get a sense of what they wanted to do next. "I talked a little bit about the system and what they needed to do and what they need to pay attention to. I mentioned these things so that they would not be caught unaware of what to do next." Pastor Peter took more of a leadership role and helped Mei's family plan the viewing, the burial, and the memorial service. He planned each part of the funeral carefully, helping highlight the relationship of the deceased with those around her and as a witness of God's blessings. He had engaged the family with planning the liturgy and guided them through the parts, encouraging them to reflect on what he felt was significant and necessary. Pastor Peter emphasizes the need of tailoring the liturgy to fit the family, rather than trying to fit the family into the existing liturgy:

It is important to make sure you tailor the liturgy to each family. I will go look at their situation, ask them what they would want, what kind of readings or hymns they want in the service; if they don't have any opinions, I will use my own judgment and use my favorites. Sometimes, I will use

what I know about them in the sermon to use that to encourage them. I want to make sure that they are comforted by the service. That's the most important part. So if the service is on Sunday, we can have a pianist and we have service that will be a lot like Sunday service. One of the things I will do in the burial, I will invite everyone to get up and stand in a circle, hand-in-hand. The feeling of being hand-in-hand is very comforting to people. There are people who they trust in the viewing and they will feel comforted by that.

Pastor Peter thoughtfully arranged each part of the funeral service, including the viewing, the memorial service, and burial, understanding that in each part, he is speaking to different aspects of her relationship with others:

[F]or the memorial service, I will focus on the person's relationship to the church and what they have done in the church and their presence in the church. So the focus is different. For the viewing it is more about the relationship of the family.

The reason he makes these distinctions is because he wants to make sure that the funeral service is a holistic event that connects the deceased with different aspects of her life. What is most important is to get a “sense of where the family is.” That is the foundation on which he builds his pastoral care: starting from where the people are, figuring out where their goals are and finding God in the midst of that, and then guiding people to that place, both practically and spiritually. He is not pushing his own agenda but working with people to help them move forward.

Pastor Peter tries to offer both practical and spiritual guidance to reduce the burden on the families and “reduce uncertainty and other negative feelings. In the midst of [struggle], of course, I have to offer emotional support and see what other needs they have.” Even while Mei’s family had internal conflicts, Pastor Peter was able to assist them in planning a service that seemed to bring the family comfort and allowed Mei’s friends and the congregation to remember Mei. Even if some members of this family were estranged and were unfamiliar with the deceased’s relationships in her life or how she spent her last days, they learned more about Mei and her life, because the pastor and other family members remember her through Pastor Peter’s guidance of the service. For Pastor Peter, pastoral care is not just about being present to people during times of crisis or struggle. Rather, pastoral care is a caring act of presence that he can give in good times and in bad.

Esther

The congregation member that I interviewed at Formosa Church is a current member who does not serve in any leadership capacity. I will call her “Esther.” She was very open with talking to me, inviting me over to her home at my convenience. She had told me that since she is retired, she was flexible about the time to meet. Initially, we had set the time to meet at her home however, she changed her mind about having the interview there. I asked if she would prefer to have the interview at a Starbucks or another coffee shop. She was enthusiastic about this and asked if I could come her house and then drive her to Starbucks since she was not sure where it was. I agreed. On the day of the interview, I arrived at her house, and she invited me in and said she would be happy to have the interview in her home. It turns out that she had a houseguest and had been worried that the interview would disturb her. Ever since her husband died and she retired, Esther has earned extra income by subletting a bedroom in her house to college students. It is also an opportunity for her to have another person in the house to keep her company. Since the interview happened while the roommate was away at school, she invited me in to conduct the interview.

Her house was older but had a fairly open floor plan, with the living room/dining room combined into one space. We sat at her dining table and she offered me a beverage. I accepted, and we began the interview. From the interview, I realized that this is a woman who is very independent and likes to do things her way. When recounting the events of her life, it was clear she has always marched to the beat of her own drum, ignoring what others might think. She has made many decisions that have demonstrated her independent streak, such as attending a different church than her husband, both in Taiwan and in the US, going to different activities at different churches on her own, without her husband or any friends, being the only woman elder in the session, driving a long

distance after work to attend meetings, thoughtfully praying about whether to immigrate to the United States and then deciding to do so, and staying in her home, despite being on her own.

A few times a week, Esther drives over an hour to help her son by babysitting her grandchildren. She has also declined the invitation from her family in Taiwan to return and live with them. She wants to stay in her own house, and she was able to find a way to do that by taking in a roommate which has made her lifestyle tenable. Esther explained that she had stayed with relatives when she first moved to the United States. The first Sunday she was in Los Angeles, they decided to attend a Taiwanese church that was some distance away. For some reason, instead of going back to that church, her relative suggested that they attend a church that was closer, Formosa Church. Esther agreed. As soon as they walked into the Formosa Church, Esther was surprised to find that there was someone she already knew in the congregation: an old boss of hers from Taiwan. In that moment, she felt that God was telling her that this was the place for her. She felt immediately at home at Formosa Church and has been a member since. She has continued to attend this church even after moving more than an hour away. She continued to attend this church even when her husband decided that he wanted to go to a church closer to their home because he wanted to be able to take shifts at work on Sunday afternoons.

Esther had served one term as elder of Formosa Church several decades ago. She said that she thought it was actually her husband that the church wanted to elect to be an elder, but since he was so quiet, they thought that she would be a nice compromise. Since she had already moved over an hour away from Formosa Church, it had been difficult for her to serve out her term. Moreover, she was the only woman elder at that time. Because of both of these reasons, she chose not to serve another term and has not done so since then.

Esther's Loss

Esther lost her husband almost a decade ago. It has become such a distant memory that she does not quite recall all the details, perhaps because she did not really want to dwell on his passing. While he was not elderly, he had been in poor health before he passed away, including having heart and stomach problems. During the time he was ill, he was very stubborn and wanted to do things his way and was often non-compliant with his medications and treatments. According to Esther, she was never forceful with her husband. She had always given her husband latitude to take care of himself the way he wanted, even if it was not the same as she might have chosen and might have even been bad for his health. When he refused to take his medications or see the doctors, she would not push him to do so. At the same time, both she and her husband had a strong faith and believe in the power of prayer and God's ability to heal. This meant that when her husband insisted on prayer instead of the medications or the hospital, she agreed. Not only did this mean that she felt that God has always guided her in the right direction and gave her strength for whatever it is that she faced, but that God was present to her husband; so when he was ill, they prayed for healing and received some respite.

While Esther had never stopped attending Formosa Church on Sundays and even served as an elder, Formosa Church was almost an hour away from her home. When asked about pastoral care support by the church at his time of death, she reported that "at that time, I didn't think about that church at all. It was so far away." When she discovered that her husband had died, the first person she called was a friend from her husband's church who had helped out with his care and who lived close by. She had not even thought about calling her pastor or anyone from her church, because "everyone was 40-50 minutes away. I didn't think about anyone at [Formosa] Church. ...I wanted people who could come right away." Yet, as she reflected on the events of that night, she did admit that there were members of Formosa Church who lived close enough to come, had she

remembered to call them. Moreover, Esther reported that she didn't even call the then-pastor of Formosa church until the next day.

The lack of regular community meant that when she wanted to participate in church activities, she had to find them elsewhere. She often attended Bible study, prayer groups, and retreats at churches that were closer to her home. Moreover, her husband had wanted to work on Sunday afternoons and could not afford to spend that much time commuting to a church so far away. This meant that he ultimately decided to attend another church; one that was closer to their home. On the night her husband died, she called a church friend from her husband's church, who had known about his illness and had offered her kind assistance in taking him to a senior center when Esther was at work. In turn, this friend called her own pastor, who came to offer his support. Esther recalled that on the evening her husband passed away, she had contacted "a sister" from her husband's church, who had helped her with caring for her husband in the past. Rather than coming by herself, this sister called other members of the church, including the pastor of that church. People came throughout the early morning, including the pastor of that church. She reported that she did not feel that she needed anything, including any pastoral care that evening, since she felt that God was with her and she had peace throughout the evening. Yet, she remembers that someone had started playing hymns on the piano and everyone who was there joined in with singing until the mortuary came to get his body. This act of care has stayed with her while other details may have faded away, which demonstrates the impact that this had on her, even if she did not identify it as a form of pastoral care.

When she was planning the funeral, she did not reach out to the pastor of Formosa Church. Instead, she looked to the local church, her husband's church, to help her and her son plan the service. She asked three pastors to assist in the memorial service. While she remembers that three pastors were asked, she does not at all remember what each pastor's role was in the service. In

reflecting back on that process, she feels that she has the information to do things differently, now that she has had time to think about it. Today, Esther feels that she would feel comfortable calling Pastor Peter and asking for his assistance. In fact, she has already planned that Pastor Peter should be the one conducting her funeral when she dies. Now that she has had time to think about what she would want, she has decided that she would want a simple service, rather than a whole ritual. She would just want one pastor with the family and maybe select friends, and some prayer. Esther had gone along with the kind of funeral that her son wanted when her husband died, but she did not want the same for herself.

Esther's Story and Witness

For Esther, the way that she understood her life's journey has been with God at the center, guiding and leading her to where she needed to be. She describes the decision to immigrate to the United States as God's will, "This was very miraculous. It was really like this. I wanted to follow God's will, but I didn't really know this terminology then." But God's presence was not limited to merely this one decision. She said, "I am grateful to God. Even though life did not turn out the way I imaged it." She spoke about her marriage and that she made sure that she chose to marry a Christian above all else. For her, this meant understanding and support as she participated in church activities, even though he did not participate. When her husband was sick, he addressed illness through his faith, even if it meant that he refused to take his medications as the doctors had prescribed. Instead, he relied on prayer. She trusted him, saying, "he said he trusted God. So what could I do? So, I prayed. I said, he wants to glorify You and let You do Your work." There were several times when he actually did improve, which further solidified her faith that God is in charge and leads the way.

Throughout the interview, she talked not only about listening and following God, asking God to help her, but also doing what she can to participate in church activities and retreats so that she can learn more about God. Esther is always trying to grow her faith so that she can feel the presence of the Holy Spirit with her more. Even though she is a Presbyterian and has always been a Presbyterian, she has attended a fellowship of churches that had various traditions, including Presbyterian and charismatic traditions. This faith says to her that her God is always faithful and is always present. She spoke of feeling a sense of peace during that time, despite the grief and pain of death. Even though she lived far away from Formosa Church, she was able to find churches with fellowships and retreats in her local area that she attended when she was available to continue to build on her relationship with God in a different way. For her, Formosa church might be home, but it certainly did not limit her faith. At the end of the interview, she told me what she really wanted me to know:

I really want to stress that I didn't depend on anyone. I really felt led by God. And God would put people in the way to help, like the sister who offered to drive him and my son who came home. This was all God. Sometimes, people say you just have to depend on your faith.

This is where Esther makes it clear to me that her relationship with God is the most important, which includes her ability to witness as a part of this relationship.

For Esther, she felt only peace. “I think this was a peace that could only come from God. It wasn’t that easy. I knew this wasn’t natural, but I was very grateful. And I knew he wouldn’t suffer any more.” Her husband worked very hard for the family his entire life and he had a very strong faith, holding on to God especially when he was sick. She was able to find blessing in his death, as he was able to rest with his Lord after a long, hard life. As she was telling me her story of when she lost her husband, Esther said that she wanted to share her story with me, because “this shows the mercy and grace of God. Every step of the way, God took care of me. I know this. I understand this.” Later in our conversation, as she spoke about the evening of her husband’s death, she insisted

throughout that even though it was a surprise that he died when he did, she felt fine. “I really had peace. I was able to sleep, even. I believe that God was with me. The Holy Spirit was with me. Even when I was crying, it was OK.” Her emphasis was that God was with her, but not only that, God provided for her through the presence of others as well. For her, these people who were helpful were there only because God brought them to her. “I really feel like God has opened doors and paved the way for me. Sometimes, people say ‘God takes care of me,’ but I can really see it. That was God; not people. Everything has worked out so well.” While she cried when she first found that he had died, she did not cry at the funeral because “I didn’t need to. ...I’m usually not a peaceful person, but at that time, I really was peaceful. That was the Lord’s peace.” For Esther, God was at the center of everything in her life. Part of her motivation for speaking to me in this interview was so that people would know that one has to always look for God.

Findings: Taiwan Church

When I first approached Pastor James about my project, he was on board immediately. He thought of three families right off the bat that would fit my qualifications. He was disappointed that there weren’t that many people in his congregation that could help me with the project, because they all declined except for one. However, he was more than happy to speak with me and helped me think of other churches in the Southern California region that might be able to assist me. He is very well connected with the churches in Southern California and knows the pastors very well. For him, pastoral care is not merely for the members of his congregation. He believes that it is important to care for his colleagues as well. He talked about having get-togethers with the other pastors in the area and coming up with different retreats and other ways so that the pastors can support each other. As a part of colleague care, Pastor James also thought of different ways to encourage his

fellow pastors to care for their spouses and families, as it is common for Taiwanese American Church to expect all members of the family to contribute to the pastor's ministry.

“Pastor James”

Because of his experience in the United States, Pastor James was somewhat different from a traditional Taiwanese pastor. He spoke English much better than most other pastors and his wife had not been a very important part of the congregation. This was a very interesting interview because it is fairly clear that despite being more comfortable with Taiwanese over English, this pastor was very much like an American minister, successfully separating his family and work life and navigating his boundaries. His wife was not present at church while he was at work, because she also had a full-time job. The congregation understands her outside obligations and both Pastor James and his wife have drawn a very clear boundary that his wife is, in fact, not serving with him in his ministry. She will participate in ministries that she feels called to, as any member of the congregation would do. Therefore, she participates in educating the children, being on the rotation for teaching the kids because she chooses to do so.

When I called to make an appointment with Pastor James for the interview, he agreed right away, and we were able to set up a time on Friday afternoon. When we found a date that worked, we met at church, rather than his home. There was a Bible study in the church happening at that time, but there was another pastor that was leading the group. While Pastor James was at work in the office, he was not involved in the activity that day. That being said, people recognized that he was working at the church and did come and talk to him throughout the time I was there.

Pastor James spoke about learning on the job. He has spent all his ministry in the United States, and almost all of it at Taiwan Church. This means that he has not had a lot of ministerial experience. Though he had been chosen by the pastor of the Taiwan Church before him and co-

pastored with him, there was still a learning curve for Pastor James. In our interview, he spoke about the observations he made throughout his years of ministry and reflected on the differences between the beginning of his ministry and now. He had the advantage of being hand-picked by his predecessor, so there was a sense of acceptance right away. Yet, he spoke about the challenges as a young pastor at a community church in spite of this acceptance because the congregation did not necessarily want to share all their issues with him. He had to grow and build his own relationship with the church and its people; to develop trust rather than lean on the work of his predecessor. Even though he was the pastor, people had to come around to feeling safe to talk to this new pastor about their concerns, especially as Pastor James was a very young man compared to his predecessor and to many of the older members in the congregation.

The Beginning Challenges and His Solutions

When one is offering pastoral care, it is common to start with the understanding that there may be particular issues that need to be addressed. For Pastor James, this was a struggle in the beginning, since Taiwanese people “don’t want people to know when things are not going well in their families. They don’t like to be vulnerable. And only when you build a relationship with them, will they start telling you something.” Taiwan church was his first call so, looking back, he understands that the congregation judged him as being too young and too inexperienced, in ministry and in life, to share their troubles and struggles with him. Though he was their pastor, they were not forthcoming about sharing details of their lives with him, perhaps because they did not think he would understand. In fact, in the first five years of his ministry, he stated that he did not even realize that people had problems because nobody had talked to him about anything. In his naiveté, he believed that everyone was doing fine. Now that Pastor James has spent over a decade at Taiwan Church, and he can “tell from comparison from now until before, they tell me a lot more now.” The

more trust and relationship that is built up, believes Pastor James, the more people will be willing to share what is going on in their lives.

In his fifth year of ministering at Taiwan Church, Pastor James felt that he needed to do more. Upon reflection, he decided to take the advice and example of a fellow minister and give out weekly “homework” to his congregation. He asked them to reflect on the sermon of the week and had them share their thoughts to him via email or via a written statement. This could be anonymous if they preferred, though it does not need to be. He requested the congregation complete this assignment as a way to assist him and help him grow by giving him feedback on the sermon that he is preaching and feedback on worship and whatever else was on their minds and hearts. The results were phenomenal, as people began sharing more deeply than he had expected. Pastor James was able to use this method to better understand how people are doing and offer better pastoral care, by reassuring the congregation that they do not have to share their troubles in person: they can do it through the safety of a computer screen, with a lot of time to think and edit their thoughts before committing to the share. Additionally, the reflections are anonymous. He emphasizes that he merely wants their thoughts on the sermon rather than wanting them to be vulnerable and share deep thoughts. Because of this perspective, “everyone is very serious when they fill this out.” He is then able to “summarize and next week I will give them the feedback, or I will preach another message where I will address the feedback. So it is continuing.” Yet, he recognizes that “some will write down their problems, some of these have nothing to do.... Not related to anything. My son or my husband has something, could you please pray for me.” Through this process, his congregation does feel more comfortable sharing their needs with him. Since the congregation started doing these tasks, they feel more comfortable and connected with Pastor James. With his casual demeanor, speaking of the various hobbies that he has, his members are more open to sharing their thoughts and worries with him in person or on paper. During their weekly Bible study, there is a reflection time,

where he asks the participants what they have learned this week. Even though he does not ask them for personal struggles or issues, their response will allow Pastor James to understand their problems better and get to know “what kind of issue they have in their life.”

Pastor James and the Community

Since Taiwan Church is a community church, Pastor James lives close to his members. The longer Pastor James is there, the more he is able to use his numerous hobbies to build rapport with his congregants because they live within close proximity to the church and getting together is not an arduous task. Pastor James has a number of hobbies that he enjoys. It is clear from speaking to him and his congregation that people are aware of these hobbies and support or join him in these. For example, he has pets who like to eat certain kinds of food. People will bring him their leftover food that they know his pets enjoy; some offer to pet sit for him when he is traveling. Sometimes, his hobbies allow him to develop a relationship with people. This is how Pastor James was able to get to know Ming very well. Pastor James says that he and Ming are “coffee pals.” They both enjoy gourmet coffee and enjoy trying out different kinds of coffees. So, Pastor James would spend time with his coffee pal to explore different kinds of coffees, doing taste tests together, trying out new and different coffees. This led to a time when Ming felt free to share with Pastor James his problems with his family. When Ming’s mother died, and Ming was looking for support, Pastor James was the first one he called. When Ming’s family decided against having a funeral service because of the complicated relationship the family had with one another, Pastor James was the only person he called and entrusted to be there for him.

As the pastor of a community church, Pastor James performs about three funerals a year, sometimes these are for friends of members or their families. This means that while he may have a connection to the deceased, he is not always intimately familiar with them. The deceased or their

families may not even be Christian but came for assistance because they know that Taiwan Church is a community that they can trust. Pastor James understands that he and Taiwan Church are resources for many non-Christians who may not have elsewhere to turn. This is compounded by the low number of Christians in Taiwan as Chen discovered. Many families have both Christians and non-Christians within it. Of the three funerals a year that Pastor James performs, it is likely that at least one of them is for someone who is not a member of his church, or a member of any church.

A lot of times you don't know the [deceased] person. If you don't know the person, it's usually a non-believer or if they're a believer, the person's family is not. believers too. So you don't do evangelism in the funeral. That's my perspective. Some people do, they want to do evangelism during the funeral, they call people to believing in God, but I say no. That's not... what it should be because I believe this is the time to mourn. Sorrow. It is a time to let go of their emotions. It is a time they mourn themselves. It is time to digest everything that happens for the last 30, 40, maybe 70 years. So don't give them too many lessons. Don't give them too many teachings. Just lead them through the process of mourn. That's it. Don't do two things at once.

His priority is on care, rather than evangelism, because Pastor James believes that it is important to care for souls rather than to attempt to evangelize them in the moment of grief. “[E]very time you are facing different people, you have to adjust yourself. So today is mostly non-church goers, so you need to address that to their level in order to embrace them.” This is a challenge facing Taiwanese American churches and pastors, as they may encounter needs in the greater community among those who are not believers. These people come to the church by default, come to them for assistance because this is a place for the community to receive aid. Traditional Taiwanese religions do not have the same kind of organizational assistance for people as other religious denominations do. In my experience at the hospital, it can be difficult to find Buddhist monks to come to the hospital to chant for people who are dying, while pastors see hospital visits as a part of their ministries. Being present to the family in their time of need has helped Pastor James build a trusting relationship with them so that, should they ever want to learn more about Christianity, there is already a connection and a safe relationship they can call upon.

Assisting with Death and Dying

Pastor James frequently encounters death in his role as a community pastor. He finds that the assistance people need when they face death and dying is not always predictable. He has learned to be flexible and to have a lot of information available to fully support the family. Pastor James shares his process of what he does for families when they have lost someone:

I will arrange a time with the family to... if they need help for the programs and remind them where they need to be. What they need to be aware of. Some elderly is well prepared. They have everything settled. If it is an accident and they don't have anything settled, I tell them they can talk to Rose Hills. They will help them, but the charges will be higher. I will give them several choices... you can do this or that... and see how much they need help. And then I will set up a time for the funeral and burial. And then, if they need cremation... depends on how much they need and how much they ask me to do. So, if they want me to be their all, then I will be there.

Pastor James has learned to be available, but only to the extent people need it. He makes the assessment of what people need before offering his services, because it is important to him to be present, but helpful. Like Pastor Peter, Pastor James' goal is to be helpful and supportive of people, rather than to apply his own agenda of what he thinks people should be doing.

Unfortunately, this sometimes means that during the funerals, people might ask things of him that he did not expect, because he had not guided the families through any formal planning they have not talked about a service. Since he has so much experience, Pastor James is able to think on his feet when things are asked of him. "There are some families that just want the viewing without the service. We had a family like that. But during the viewing, they asked me, 'Pastor, do you want to say a few words?' And then I said a few words and then it turned into a funeral service. Unexpected." Out of the numerous funerals he has attended, he has had a hand in planning only about 10 of them. For the rest he had to think on his feet to offer a ritual that would bring order to the chaos of grief. He talks about these times and how he thinks on his feet to address these requests:

They won't have anything prepared, they will have a viewing and then they ask if anyone would want to say anything. And then I'll say something like 'your mom used to like to sing this hymn. Let's sing it all together for the purpose of remembering her.' And then they ask if anyone would like to say anything, and if nobody says anything, I'll stand up and say something. It's informal.

That Pastor James is able to do this means that he has to know something about the deceased and their families because these offerings of Word, song, and thoughts have to really apply to the person and be meaningful to the family. This demonstrates how intentional Pastor James is in his daily ministry to pay attention to his congregation and to get to know them very well.

Funeral Experience: Ming's Family

As previously discussed, Pastor James had been building his relationship with James before anything was happening with his mother, based on their mutual hobby. When his mother died, Pastor James was the first person Ming called for support. Pastor James was able to meet Ming quickly. Later, Pastor James was able to help Ming through the logistics of planning, especially with the scheduling. Ming began preparing for the funeral and service and called his family from out of town to come to say their final goodbyes. He was also present to ask about the services the family might want.

Unfortunately, Ming's family was quite fractured. Only two brothers of Ming's several siblings came. Because of this complicated relationship, Ming's family did not want to have a public memorial or funeral. Not only did Pastor James acknowledge this, but, knowing Ming as well as he did, Pastor James knew that it was possible "they will never see each other again. So this was the last peaceful moment they have all together." For Pastor James, it was understandable that Ming's family could feel isolated if there were people "in attendance for [Ming so that] you have a group of supporters, but we don't have any." Yet, the family was raised Christian, so they all had some respect

for the pastor, especially one who had taken care of Mom. Thus, Pastor James was very intentional about his role as a supportive, non-judgmental presence for all of them and not just for Ming.

Instead, Ming invited Pastor James to the cremation, who made sure his presence was neutral and non-judgmental. He followed their lead and did not push any agenda. In fact, he did not even bring along a service liturgy. It was only after he arrived at the cremation that he realized he was the only non-family present. While Ming had turned down the offer to have a memorial service, this did not mean that he did not want anything done. Rather, Ming wanted a funeral service at the cremation without explicitly clarifying his hope for that. “[T]hey didn’t say anything about a funeral...I didn’t know until after I went that they meant a full funeral service.” While Ming provided two hymns, he did not do any other preparations. Pastor James responded by creating a liturgy on the spot. Simply because the funeral ritual is informal and simple or even if it is private does not mean it is not significant. Pastor James believes that the liturgy brought formality to the cremation and some order in the midst of the chaos that might have been present. Yet, he did not try to overstep his bounds by trying to address any additional the conflicts between the siblings during the funeral; he solely focused on the deceased and honoring her.

Paul

The congregation member from Taiwan Church who agreed to talk to me is a retired pastor, who did not serve in Taiwan Church. I will call him “Paul” in my study. Both he and his wife became members after he retired from ministry and they moved to Southern California to be closer to their children. Because of the number of churches without a pastor in Southern California, there can often be pulpit supply requests for retired pastors, so he often assisted other churches that did not attend Taiwan Church. There were times that his wife attended another church with him when he preached, but his wife was a more regular member of Taiwan Church and she was very familiar

with the people and with the church building itself. Despite having vision problems, she was able to get around because she had memorized the church building, such as the number of steps it takes to get into the sanctuary. Not only did she attend worship, but also attended the women's group and prayer meetings. If they had Bible study, they would both participate, as Paul was not expected to do any more than pulpit supply. Over the years, Paul did attend Taiwan Church, especially its activities outside of Sunday, and continues to do so.

Paul's wife died only three years ago of breast cancer. She had been diagnosed with cancer during his ministry in the United States. She had received treatment and had gotten better and did not think about cancer again. However, the cancer returned, so they decided to retire and move back to Taiwan to seek additional treatments. After a while in Taiwan, they were told that she was in the last stage of her life and they did not recommend further treatment. Since their children were in the United States, they moved to Southern California to spend the last days of her life with family. However, once back in the United States, she went for a second opinion. Her oncologist offered different treatments from the ones she had been receiving and she agreed to continue. She had felt that the treatments were working when, finally, her oncologist said that she could take a two-month break from the treatments and she could rest. Since she was feeling well, they planned a trip back to Taiwan. Unfortunately, while she was in Taiwan, the doctors there said she was not better and refused to let her travel to come back to the US. As a result, she died while in Taiwan. Because she spent her last few months in Taiwan, the congregation had not been able to care for them during that time, but they had been present to both Paul and his wife during the time she was undergoing treatment. When I called to make an appointment for the interview, Paul was open to have me come over whenever I was available. He invited me to his home, where he lives with his son and his family. While his son was not in the room during the interview itself, he was there before and after the interview, as he had the day off. After we had finished with the interview, Paul invited me to stay

for lunch, and we had lunch in their home. We were able to take some time for casual fellowship during lunch.

For Paul, even though he was not always a part of the congregation and not a regular attendee at the church, the elders did reach out to him and his wife and keep them in mind. The care he received was not a simple visit either. He recounts an elder at Taiwan church who actively did research to understand more about the disease that Paul's wife was battling before stopping by to share what he had:

When there were problems, they shared their concern and they will bring over fruits or other things that can help... There is an elder who grows sweet lemons in his house. He researched that sweet lemons can help with cancer. Treat and prevent. So, when he had harvested some, he would send them over to my house.

Even when he was in Taiwan, Paul and his wife received care from a previous congregation that they had belonged to. The church that he was a member of knew that they did not have a place to live, since they were merely visiting, so they allowed him to stay in their empty parsonage for as long as they needed. Additionally, members of that church stopped by to visit them regularly, at which time Paul's wife would also offer them support in return.

Paul also looked at death in the context of God. As he shared the story of his wife's battle with cancer, he pointed out the numerous times when he felt that God's hand was in place to help them. This included the Christian doctors who were extra kind to her and offered encouragement to her. He shared information about the naturalist doctor in Taiwan who used nutrition and vitamins to help people with cancer. When they went to see him, he had given her treatment without taking any money from them because the doctor was a Christian and knew that Paul was a pastor, saving them almost \$30,000. Another time, an old friend who had been a member of his congregation in Taiwan was able to send her expensive medication that she could benefit from because he did not need it anymore. Rather than attributing it to his own work or personhood, he believed it was by the

grace of God. Paul may have been formally retired, and his wife may not have officially been a minister, but it was clear that they were in ministry together and she supported not only his ministry, but the church as well. Both he and his wife thought about her illness and death in relationship to God as a way to witness to others about God.

Thoughts on God, Death, and Dying

Paul did not spend much time talking about the pastoral support he received; even in response to my questions, he would bring the conversation back to helping people find meaning and connection with God. During the time she was battling cancer, Paul spoke to her often about death. As a woman of strong faith, she was not afraid of death, but instead, thought about what she would take with her into death: love and God's Word. This was something she wanted to work on in that last stage of death, so she listened to the Bible, hymns, and devotionals. When she was fighting for her life, Paul and his wife did talk about death and dying. Even then, "she doesn't care about what happens to her after death. This is a very good, very strong part of who she was" because her faith was strong, and this is what the focus for people should be. Not only that, but she continued to witness to God by memorizing the Scriptures, especially all the Psalms, which she would recite to her visitors. She would also offer prayers for those she would meet. Her visitors, who had come to support her but instead, "many felt touched by her during their visits. ... they felt they could be inspired by her and felt that her faith strengthened theirs." Moreover, Paul was proud that she was able to care for those who came to support her, by reciting the Scriptures, praying for them, and offering them comfort about death. As a pastor and a husband, he said that "every time, not just with my wife, but other people too, in their last moments, when they are still able to, they should know...where their fears are and are you ready. If you're not doing this preparation, and just doing

the funeral, then it's not really that significant." It was important that his wife was able to witness to others even while she was struggling herself.

During the interview, Paul recalls the spiritual strength his wife had during the last stage of cancer in her life. He said that she did not care about what happens to her after death. Instead of focusing on her impending death or her suffering, she looked outward to care for others, including praying for them and offering encouragement. She was able to focus on what was really important: God and other people. "Every time, not just my wife, but other people too, in their last moments, when they are still able to, they should know where their fears are and 'are you ready.' If you're not doing this preparation, and just doing the funeral, then it's not really that significant." This sentiment is so important, to be able to share in gratitude for life and to remember the happy memories; the celebration and honoring of a God-given life. This is the work that he keeps in mind as he walks through death and grief with his own family, but also with others.

Funerals

During the time I was doing my visits, both congregations suffered a loss and both pastors were involved in their funerals. I had made requests about attending the funerals or any of the activities surrounding this time as part of my study. At the Taiwan Church, it was the mother of a member, who I will call "Ming" and at the Formosa Church, it was a member, "Mei" who had died. Neither family had funeral services open to the public, including viewing, cremation, or burial. However, there was a memorial service held at Formosa church that was open to the public, which I was able to attend. Pastor Peter gave me all the information and even emailed me the liturgies he put together for the family. Additionally, he sat down with me afterwards and we had another interview specifically about this event. For the loss at Taiwan Church, the family wanted to have an entirely

private affair. There was no memorial service, and the funeral and cremation were both closed to anyone outside the family and Pastor James.

Mei

Mei's funeral at Formosa Church was fairly traditional. Pastor Peter put together a liturgy and guided the family in putting together the service. They discussed the service together and thought about what they wanted to do and who to invite for each part. Pastor Peter did have thoughts in terms of who was appropriate for certain roles, and how to split the workload with the elder representative from the church. However, Pastor Peter also wanted to give the family leeway to invite people who were meaningful to Mei to participate in the service. There was a reading, a few songs, a sermon, and eulogy. There were two choirs present, including the choir from Formosa church and another TPC church in Southern California. It seems that the deceased had been active in multiple churches as well, like the elder I interviewed from this church. Her husband, said Pastor Peter, was one of the founding members of that other TPC church and they lived in the same area where the church is located. Interestingly, despite being one of the founding members of this other church, Mei and her family continued to worship at Formosa Church on a weekly basis.

In the worship, Mei's older brother shared a life review of her with everyone who attended, basically reading the biography from the funeral bulletin. Her son-in-law shared words of gratitude for the congregation. Her granddaughter read out loud her favorite scripture in Taiwanese. The songs that were sung were chosen by the soloist and by the choirs, with minimal input from the family. Family members came from out of town, whom her daughter introduced at the end of the service to everyone. That part was informal and felt like an impromptu act that was done only because the snack boxes—that they ordered to give out to the attendees —were delayed by the traffic. The music of the service was performed by a member of the family who was a pianist. There

was also an organist, who was the teacher of the family member. The only thing I noticed missing was tissues for the speakers and in the pews. This was fine, however, as for the most part, there did not seem to be a lot of crying. People seemed to be holding it together very well and not a lot of emotion was displayed. When the service ended, the family exited the sanctuary first, to greet everyone else at the door as they exited. Yet, the attendees did not all walk out together. Many people stayed behind in the church to talk to each other. These conversations seemed light, with people smiling and sometimes laughing. The people who had stayed behind were perhaps not as close to the family but came because they were members of the choir or felt they wanted to come to the service to pay their respects.

The sanctuary had a flower cross and many flower arrangements up in the front of the sanctuary. There were not any additional decorations. The bulletin used stock paper and was much heavier and sturdier than the usual Sunday bulletin, which was printed on regular paper. Per Pastor Peter, the family had been considering not giving a biography of the deceased, but the pastor insisted that reading a bio would be important to everyone at the memorial service. The family thought about what Pastor Peter said and decided to write a biography, which her brother read during the memorial service. This biography was also included in the packet with the bulletin. The pastor mentioned to me that the family had contemplated asking another pastor to participate in the service, but they had changed their mind because they didn't want to insult the pastor by asking him to do a smaller part of the service. Pastor Peter has a template that he uses for the liturgy, but it is something that he has created and tailored to the family, rather than a standard liturgy that is published in the Presbyterian worship book. There were many family members present, all of whom sat in the front, left-hand side. When the service was over, Pastor Peter invited a family representative, the daughter, to come up to the front and introduce the family to the congregation. Many of the family members were from out of town or did not attend this church. After the service,

there was a boxed lunch that was passed out to all the people who attended. This was the family's way of thanking their friends for coming to support them.

“Ming”

The celebration of Mei's death was very different from the death of Ming's mother. While Ming is a member at Taiwan Church, his mother had been a member at another church farther away. However, as she had gotten older and became more ill, she moved into Ming's house, until she ultimately ended up living in a skilled nursing facility. Ming had a few siblings, but none of them were members at Taiwan Church either and, in fact, the siblings were scattered in different places and did not regularly see each other. Since her original church is over an hour and a half away by car without any traffic from her son's home, she had not attended that church in a long time. Instead, she had become a member of Taiwan Church by default after she started living with her son. While the church may not have known her very well, the members of the church provided at least an annual visit with her to offer pastoral care. Pastor James, however, became friendly with Ming through their shared hobby of coffee. Even before she had died, Ming had shared some of the brokenness of the family with Pastor James.

Thus, when she died, it was Ming that took care of all the arrangements. Because of the brokenness of the family, however, the family declined to have anything public done, including a viewing, burial, or memorial service. According to Pastor James, who was there for the family, he was the only non-family member to attend the funeral. Only the children were invited to the cremation, and only her male children attended the cremation. The entirety of the service ended up being only the sons and Pastor James. After the service, Ming invited Pastor James to have dinner together, but his brothers did not join them. Once the service was over, they were scattered, and it is possible that the siblings may never see each other again. Accordingly, I did not observe any part of

that service, though I was able to interview the pastor about his perspective of that funeral. I will offer my analysis in the next chapter.

A Summary

There are many ways that Formosa Church and Taiwan Church differ. While both congregations are Taiwanese American, these two congregations were very different from each other such as the geographic make up of their congregants and their organizational cultures. Yet, both churches seem to find their own way of providing pastoral care to their members, based on the leadership and guidance offered by the pastors. It is notable that there were so many similarities between the two very different families that suffered losses. Both families shared similar struggles at home in the family that they were not comfortable sharing with outsiders, though both families felt comfortable enough with their pastors that they were willing and able to share their complicated family dynamics, understanding that the pastors are there to support them without judgment. It demonstrates that with intentionality, both pastors were able to break through the barriers that prevented Taiwanese people from sharing about their family struggles. In chapter four, I will continue to address this and demonstrate how the pastors, in their opinion, were able to break through the barrier to build relationships and offer pastoral care. I will also offer perspectives from the families on how they grieve and what they thought they needed or did not need as they reflect back on their loss.

Pastoral care is about making connections with the congregation so that the pastor can offer support and presence to the church, individually and as a whole. There are specific challenges within every community and the Taiwanese community is no different. The pastor is not just a leader in the church but also serves as the representations of both God and the church in the world, to the people. However, simply because one holds the office of the pastorate does not necessarily mean

that people are going to trust the pastor implicitly and immediately, sharing their most intimate and vulnerable thoughts and issues. Both Pastors Peter and James acknowledge the difficulty they have with building a relationship with members of their congregation, when they have to break through people's privacy walls so that families will be comfortable sharing their vulnerabilities and be open to receiving pastoral care. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Taiwanese Americans are very private and stoic, not readily willing to open up to share the reality of their struggles with their families or their lives. Thus, the pastors do not only work on building their relationship with their members and providing the care of presence intentionally and regularly, but both pastors preach about pastoral care in their sermons, lift up people in their prayers during worship, actively talk to people, and connect during lunchtime. Both churches encourage members to inform the church, both pastors and lay leaders, when things are happening so that news can be recorded in the prayer section of the bulletin and shared during announcements. They also engage the whole church in times of need to allow the whole community to participate in care, a subject I will address in later chapters.

Chapter Four

Interpretation of the Data: Taiwanese American Pastoral Care

While at first it seemed as though the stories that my respondents told me included their relationships with others, upon further reflection on the different themes that came up through the coding of the data, my interviews revealed two major challenges that exist in the Taiwanese community: the desire to keep vulnerability at bay and the physical distance between the church members. From the interviews, it was clear that a strong relationship is the foundation of good pastoral care. It is only through strong relationships that trust can be built, and care can be given and received, though these kinds of relationship did not come easy. Building deeper, more meaningful and significant relationships takes intentionality, creativity, pastoral authority, and, sometimes, divine assistance. The relationship building needs to be continuous and consistent, to be done even before things happen and problems arise that bring people to need care and ask for help so that when something happens, people will immediately feel that the church is a trustworthy and helpful place to find support.

The result of my research indicates that the most important aspect of pastoral care is the ability to build relationships through navigating the unique contextual landscape of their Taiwanese American Church and understanding their members. In my interviews of the pastors and their congregation members and after coding these interviews, I found that they all spoke about the relationship they have with the church, the pastor, and with God. This is consistent with the pastoral care research that I found, especially within the text of Mitchell and Anderson. The most important aspect of their faith for those whom I interviewed was having a strong relationship with God, and with this relationship, they were not concerned about grief or death. For the pastors, this relationship with God has proven to be one of several barriers in their attempts to build

relationships with their members. However, the pastors are able to fall back on their experience and personalities to provide authentic pastoral care that reflects who they are, with flexibility and focus on the person and their families. The people of the church and its leaders can and should be an important source of pastoral support for their brothers and sisters in Christ. Because the church is an essential part of providing pastoral care, it is important to look at the kinds of churches that exist with an immigrant population, specifically the differences in affinity versus community churches. While each church provides pastoral care in different ways, what is most important is that each church has its own history and context that informs the way it provides pastoral care and it is important for pastors, when entering into a relationship with a church, to understand the culture of the church so that everyone can work together to provide care to people.

Barrier to Relationships

While there is evidence that immigrants attend church to find support from their community in their daily lives, it can still be a challenge for Taiwanese Americans to ask for help in areas they may feel vulnerable. In his dissertation, *Pastoral Counseling Taiwanese Immigrants in the Church Setting: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* James Lin conducted a survey of over 12 churches in the Los Angeles area, with hundreds of responses that he separated into “student” and “non-student” categories where the majority of the students were younger and teenagers, and the non-students were adults and working. He found that only about 4% of students and 16% of non-students brought their problems and issues to their pastor for help. The numbers for therapists, lawyers, or other professionals were low as well. It is clear from his research that Taiwanese Americans harbor some hesitation and resistance to looking outward for help, which is not something that can be changed quickly, which reflects the responses that the pastors reported. Both pastors would agree that people may even try to conceal

the fact that they need help. This is one of the reasons that Pastor James was not even aware that his members were dealing with problems in the first years of his ministry.

In Lin's research, while the number of people seeking help from their pastors is low, that number is much higher than people of any other profession. This means that people who sought help looked more to their pastors than any other helping profession, which is why pastors who are motivated to offer good pastoral care can find some hope: people seem to be more willing to allow their pastors into their private lives and are more receptive to pastoral care. Taiwanese American pastors must find a way to establish a relationship with people so they can lean on their pastor and their church when things become difficult. I will describe some barriers in this chapter and then report how these pastors navigate these relationships.

Depending on God

There are several barriers to seeking care from clergy. Faith is very important to Taiwanese American Christians and their narrative. In his research, Lin found that when people encountered problems, the first "helper" that his respondents sought out was God in all of his survey populations, both student and non-student.¹¹⁶ In many ways, Taiwanese people connect with their fellow Taiwanese very quickly, but that relationship can be limited until further trust is built. For Taiwanese American Christians, their faith in God is both a strength and a weakness. While it gives them a strong foundation to make sense of tragedy in their lives and a way to process their grief, it also has the ability to make light of the care they receive from their fellow humans because they are so singularly focused on God for support. This is not to say that they do not receive care; merely that they may not recognize the importance and impact of pastoral care in their lives and in their

¹¹⁶ James Chia-Cheng Lin, "Pastoral Counseling Taiwanese Immigrants in the Church Setting: A Cross-Cultural Perspective" (D. Min diss., School of Theology at Claremont, 1997), 39-40.

grief. This serves as a barrier to sharing their vulnerabilities because it allows them a language to deny their emotional or spiritual needs from anyone other than God. Taiwanese people, then, present a paradox for their pastors: they are at the same time intimate and distant, especially when it comes to sharing vulnerabilities and asking for help. While all people may have this paradoxical nature of wanting to save face while seeking out relationships with others, “strategies for maintaining face are often culture-dependent.”¹¹⁷ It is important, then, to look at how the concept of face applies to Asian Americans and, more specifically, Taiwanese Americans.

What I found in my interviews is that the relationship people have with God is the most significant relationship they have and the narrative that they give is about the strength they derive from their faith and the importance of sharing their faith with others in the midst of their grieving. Of course, it is expected that the pastors would speak of the importance of guiding their flock to God and listening for God’s wisdom and value amid people’s struggles, but the bereaved in my research also spoke about how important God’s presence was to the trajectory of their lives and for their grieving. Those who were grieving wanted to emphasize the role of God in their lives, especially during the time of illness and loss. It was important for them to share their testimonies in these interviews. For them, their narrative has to do with witnessing to the guidance, greatness, and comforting presence of God. Both individuals that I interviewed spoke of the dependence they had on God rather than on people and spoke of the strong faith of their deceased loved ones. In their stories, they witnessed to the strength of their loved one’s faith and reliance on God.

Esther insisted that she felt nothing but peace on the evening of her husband’s death. She repeatedly stated that she did not need anyone there with her because God was there and blessed her with peace that only God could bring, saying, “I didn’t even cry. I didn’t need to.” Even when

¹¹⁷ Bethyl A. Pearson and K. Samuel Lee, “Politeness Phenomena in Korean and American Church Business Meetings.” In B. Hoffer, J. Koo, and N. Honna (Eds.), *Intercultural Communication Studies*. I(2). San Antonio, TX: Institute for Cross-Cultural Research.

people came into her life to help her, she told me that “God had prepared this person for me.”

Likewise, Paul was singularly focused on God when it came to death and dying. Instead of talking about receiving pastoral care and what he might have needed, Paul talked about how his wife was able to witness to the people visiting them who were offering support for them. Only after several prompts did he finally admit that, “it was care of the congregation for the pastor, it wasn’t me caring about them but them caring about me.” However, he then quickly moved on to describe his thoughts on pastoral care. In our interview, he spoke about providing pastoral care and what he felt was missing from pastoral care, rather than his experience of it.

Thus, both Esther and Paul made light of the care that they received from human beings and instead concentrated on God, both what God has done for them but also what they wanted to offer to God. They felt the care they needed was from God, who was at the center of life and death, and, by extension, the center of their lives. Their relationship with God is the most important aspect of their lives and having a strong faith is how they got through difficult times, for themselves and for others and witnessing to that faith is their focus. But, in this desire to put God first, there was no room to reflect on themselves or their grief. Neither spoke of their sadness, grief, or any other emotions. Rather, Esther emphasized her sense of peace and Paul spoke of the need of finding gratitude in life prior to death. It seemed that they willed themselves to move on from the deaths that they have experienced by focusing on the blessings of God and used this as the narrative in their lives, which allowed them to tell themselves that they did not need support from human beings, whether it was the church or their pastors.

Furthermore, in both interviews, Esther and Paul were much more concerned about others’ faith and being a good witness to God than their own emotional well-being. Both Esther and Paul spoke of the importance of being an example of how they believe a Christian should be, which is to trust in the peace of the Lord and the promises of a life everlasting and to be an example of that. “I

hope I helped [you]. I really want to stress that I didn't depend on anyone. I really felt led by God.," Esther said at the end of our interview. Through agreeing to participate in the interview, she had hoped that her story could be a witness to others. Similarly, Paul spent the majority of the interview talking about the importance of living in the present, being able to practice gratitude, and being able to witness to God. He said repeatedly that his wife was offering care to each and every person who entered the room to see her, rather than on how he had received care. When we were done, he, too, said that he hoped he had helped me.

While neither Esther nor Paul spoke explicitly about evangelization, understanding that Christianity involves such a small part of the Taiwanese population can help put their actions and theology in perspective. Evangelization was an important part of the Taiwanese Church, especially with the work of the missionaries, as they were religious minorities. They stood out from indigenous religions and sought to be different. Even though Esther and Paul, who grew up in Taiwan, belonged to families that were already Christians, it stands to reason that they would encounter non-Christians or newly minted Christians who they feel will benefit from their experience. They understand their stories as a tool; a way to witness and to demonstrate how their faith gives them peace and their loss serves as an example of what God can do. Esther emphasized that it was his faith that enabled her husband to live his life for as long as he did, since he avoided going to doctors and was noncompliant with his medications. She mentioned a few times that when he had pain, it was prayer and God's miracle that helped him recover. It was God who was there for her at his death that allowed her not only to continue to live, but to have peace in her life. For Paul, regardless of how ill his wife was, she spent her time lifting others up through prayer and provided an example of how faith can carry you through the most challenging of times. With this mentality, both Esther and Paul felt that this interview was a way they could share their faith to help me and potentially others as well.

Likewise, the pastors' focus for the flock is also on God. It is precisely their faith that drives them to provide pastoral care for people. For both Pastor Peter and James, pastoral care consists of helping the families remember the blessings and promises of God in a life everlasting and create a space for memories. During the time of death and dying and the funeral process, they hope to provide presence and space, witness to God's promises, embody God's love and care for people to process and share their grief, especially the parts of the relationships that might be broken and, finally, to help them attain closure, both for the relationship with the deceased and, perhaps, with the living relatives. Grief is for the living and not the dead, and God is present to all of us through this challenging time and is at work for us. They hope to help people understand that even though life is temporary, God is everlasting. When asked about pastoral care, Pastor James responded that pastoral care is to "bring people before the Lord God. And then to inspire them, to lead them, and guide them to think outside of the box to see what God has done. ...God has a greater plan." The pastoral care message he wants to give his congregation is that "We need to be responsible for who we are. And we are one day closer to our end [every day] so we are walking on this journey. We are closer to God daily, so we need to do what we need to do—what God calls us to do, daily." Similarly, Pastor Peter feels that it is important to build relationships with his members, even those who are not able to attend church on a regular basis so that he is able to truly be present to them in their time of need. Pastor Peter makes regular phone calls and sporadic visits to those who are part of the church but for whatever reason are unable to attend regularly. He wants to make sure that they understand that the church remembers them and cares about them. Yet both pastors are careful to make sure they respect the individuals and the families they are working with so that people's emotional needs are addressed.

Ultimately, all the people I interviewed felt confident that their loved ones were with the Lord, and this provided comfort and blessing for them. Death is not the end; rather, it was a

beginning. This was the message that the pastors also wanted to emphasize in their funeral liturgies and services. For both Esther and Paul, their spouses had done what they needed to do and were suffering under the strain of their illnesses, and they both mentioned how much their spouses trusted in God and were themselves examples of Christian faith. They focused outward and thought about what they could do for God and for others rather than about what they can receive and what they might need. While this may be helpful in the moment when they need to take care of the details of the funeral and death, they are not processing their emotions and the grief that surely must come. This outlook, then, can serve as a barrier for people to deny that they do need emotional and spiritual support.

The Paradox: Outsiders, Intimacy, and Face

Both pastors that I interviewed spoke about the difficulty of breaking through the defenses of their congregants to establish a more intimate relationship where people feel comfortable in sharing their lives and are willing to seek out pastoral care. And yet, Taiwanese people are very open and friendly when they first greet new guests, welcoming visitors with open arms, a meal, and invitation to return. They readily introduce themselves and think of the church as a family, which is understandable, given the immigration history of Taiwanese people and the reasons that the church was established in the first place. Pastor Peter has observed that members of an immigrant church are like family, because “when they first get here, they don’t have any family or friends. When they come to church, they become family. Their relationship is very deep and intimate.” Even though everyone in both congregations knew that I was only visiting to do research, many people invited me to continue to attend the church even after my project was done. For them, being Taiwanese American was enough for them to extend the warm invitation of joining the family. This was evident in the way they treated me when I had to unexpectedly leave on an emergency call for work.

After I communicated this to the greeter, she went to the kitchen and wrapped two meals, one for me and one for my husband, to take on our way out.

Yet, there is a desire to present a particular façade to outsiders, which is a challenge for pastors who are trying to offer care to the congregation. Pastor Peter says that any pastor at the church is essentially “a stranger. You have to build a relationship that is equally as intimate and good, but that is hard. It has to start with the individual relationship.” This is both easy and difficult, as “there is a Taiwanese saying that just simply by meeting each other, you’ve already developed 30% of an intimate relationship. The more time you spend, the more you can build more intimacy and they will be willing to talk to you and then you can better pray for them.” And yet, Pastor Peter has found that “Taiwanese people don’t like to talk. They don’t want to share anything about their families. If something happens, you don’t find out until many years after what a complicated family you have. It is about saving face.” Pastor James agreed, saying, “They don’t want people to know when things are not going well in their families. They don’t like to be vulnerable. And only when you build a relationship with them, will they start telling you something.” There is a sense of shame that Taiwanese people experience that comes with growing up in the Confucian culture within which the pastors realize they have to work.

Taiwanese people are very particular about information they will share, and it can be very difficult to get them to open up about their lives, sharing what they think might bring shame to them or their families. This attitude is not just about sharing thoughts and struggles in people’s lives but extends to the home. A common problem both pastors mentioned is that people will decline visits from the pastor because their homes are private spaces that they do not allow outsiders to enter. The lack of access to people’s homes means the inability for the pastors to provide real pastoral care and presence. Pastor Peter spoke of the difficulty of doing visitations, as many people feel uncomfortable opening their homes to others, saying that some members will complain that

they have to spend so much time cleaning before he comes that the visit is too difficult for them. The fellowship groups at Formosa Church may take place in different areas because of where the members live, but if the group cannot meet at church, his parishioners prefer to go out to a restaurant rather than gathering at someone's home for their small group meetings. One fellowship group enjoys attending an affordable Japanese restaurant for their gatherings and the owners have a room reserved for them on a monthly basis. For Pastor James, Taiwan church was his first call and he was young when he came to this church. In some ways, he felt that the congregation judged him as being too young and too inexperienced, both in ministry and in life. They were, therefore, uncomfortable sharing details of their lives with him, perhaps because they did not think he would understand. Now that Pastor James has spent over a decade at Taiwan Church, and he can "tell from comparison from now until before, they tell me a lot more now." The more trust and relationship that is built up, believes Pastor James, the more people will be willing to share what is going on in their lives.

As mentioned in chapter two, Japanese influence on Taiwanese people upheld stoicism and lack of emotions as the ideal way to behave, which includes holding back one's struggles and issues. A Kalish and Reynolds study found that Japanese Americans held an attitude of "careful control over communication" and were "restrained in communicating what they are feeling."¹¹⁸ Additionally, "face" is a very important concept in Confucian cultures, which was emphasized by the Chinese. Face is defined as a "respectability and/or deference which a person can claim for himself from others by virtue of the relative position he occupies in his social network and the degree to which he is judged to have functioned adequately in that position as well as acceptably in his general

¹¹⁸ Charles A. Corr, Clyde M. Nabe, and Donna M. Corr, *Death & Dying Life & Living* (Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1997), 129.

conduct.”¹¹⁹ This is both personal and communal. Your behaviors are not solely your own, but they reflect upon your family and, sometimes, community as well. For Angie Chung, the Asian concept of saving face means to maintain “one’s dignity and reputation by hiding and avoiding humiliating or embarrassing situations,”¹²⁰ meaning that they have to behave in a certain way in front of others, including being able to control emotions such as “anger, shame, and disappointment that they fear may undermine their self-integrity.”¹²¹ Taiwanese people are reluctant to participate in any action or behavior that leads to their “losing face”¹²² and be embarrassed in their community and bring about shame. This is even more prevalent when studies have shown that the subjects that are most difficult for Taiwanese people in regard to losing face are having “good-for-nothing children, being abandoned or dumped, disclosure of personal secrets, and being fired or laid off.”¹²³ These are issues that pastors can encounter, especially with immigrant families with generational and cultural differences. For example, the families of both churches that have lost loved ones had complicated families, with Ming’s family being so broken that the family was not even able to come together for the funeral itself. For Mei’s family, there was anxiety over whether the funeral goers would notice that the family was fractured.

The Confucian understanding of saving face is still prevalent among Taiwanese American immigrant Christians. This extends to all aspects of their lives and makes it difficult for pastoral caregivers to break through. There seems to be a lot of shame involved when it comes to people and their families, especially their children, but this seems like a common problem that many families encounter. Pastor James found that people are reticent, “if something happens, you don’t find out

¹¹⁹ Kwang-Kuo Hwang, *Foundations of Chinese Psychology: Confucian Social Relations* (New York: Springer, 2012), 268.

¹²⁰ Angie Y. Chung, *Saving Face: The Emotional Costs of the Asian Immigrant Family Myth* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2016), 15.

¹²¹ Chung, 16.

¹²² Hwang, 268.

¹²³ Hwang, 276

until many years after, what a complicated family they have.” It is the strength of the relationship that allows people to share about themselves more freely. Pastor James found that unless he builds a relationship with people, nobody will tell him anything. And, if no one talks about their problems, the pastors will not be able to offer support or care. As time goes on and as Pastors Peter and James build relationships with the members, they are trying to help the members understand that they are a safe, confidential space where people can come to share their stories without judgement. While Pastor Peter works with his wife in providing care, where she is also establishing herself as a trustworthy pastoral caregiver and seen as a part of the ministry team, Pastor James has assured his flock that confidentiality starts and ends with him; he will not repeat what they say to anyone else, including his wife. Again, both pastors lean on the tools they have and the skills unique to them to build trust and relationship with their members.

Trust

What the pastors are doing here while building relationships is also building trust, in the church, in the congregation, and in the church. Organizational scholars have noticed that having trust benefits organizations. It is not surprising for scholars studying trust and organizational culture to notice a seemingly paradoxical relationship of trust between people, just as I observed in my research: that people can be both friendly and welcoming but also closed. What they have found is that some organizations, such as the church, “bring regularity to relationships and therefore increase certainty in and thus predictability of events.”¹²⁴ This means that people within an organization start with a fundamental trust in each other as members of the same organization. Yet, this is not the only thing that is required in building trust, because merely having a strong organization is not enough. Trust is required to have a strong, intimate, and vulnerable relationship. One way that trust is

¹²⁴ Jack Barbalet, “A Characterization of Trust, and Its Consequences” in *Theoretical Sociology* (2009) 38, 367.

defined is in “terms of a confident expectation regarding another’s behavior.”¹²⁵ In other words, people have trust when they anticipate that the others will not harm them in the future with the information they have learned. Additionally, some believe that trust is cultural, it is based on the familiarity people have with each other from “communal and customary relationships.”¹²⁶ This is not always easy, because it can feel as though one is wandering into unknown territory, especially compounded by the desire to save face and not allow others to see what is imperfect.

Six, Nooteboom, and Hoogendoorn also found in their research that trust exists among people in organizations based on their participation in the organization. Their research focuses on how to build trust. They have found that to improve trust it is important for people to improve their relationships with one another and, sometimes, with the organization itself to have regular trust-building activities, to focus on “showing your own solidarity frame to others.”¹²⁷ For Six et. al, the solidarity frame exists when a person wants to be in a relationship with another person, working to meet both of their needs as much as possible. This is done selflessly, even including sacrifice. This frame works best when both parties understand that this frame is stable. The shared ethnic, cultural, and religious identity of Taiwanese American Christians establishes the foundation on which trust can first be built. Additionally, the pastors are performing pastoral care because of a higher calling; they are looking after God’s people, being an instrument of God. Thus, they are willing to make these sacrifices and be selfless in the giving of pastoral care without the expectation of reciprocation. This faith can be a force to drive other members of the church, including both members I interviewed, to reach out to support others as well. There needs to be an intentional effort to do so, which the pastors have both demonstrated as their desire and motivation. When trust is established,

¹²⁵ Barbalet, 368.

¹²⁶ Barbalet, 373.

¹²⁷ Frédérique Six, Bart Nooteboom, and Adriaan Hoogendoorn, “Actions that Build Interpersonal Trust: A Relational Signaling Perspective” in *Review of Social Economy*, 68:3 (2010), 307.

it allows people to engage in doing what they might not otherwise do. In these cases, sharing their most intimate struggles with their pastors, knowing that the pastors hold confidentiality very seriously and will be present to them to support them. This is the work that the pastors are committed to, building the relationships in and out of church on Sundays, visiting and offering themselves to establish trust in order to offer successful pastoral care.

What ultimately reminds people that their pastors can be helpful and trustworthy is the relationship that they have with the pastors, which both pastors consistently try to develop, whether or not there is something urgent that is pending. Further, the way to build those relationships is mutual whereupon the pastors rely on their authentic selves to make that connection with people, which Lin concurs with, finding that Taiwanese people may not be open to sharing their problems “until the counselor opens first.”¹²⁸ While a funeral itself may require the participation of a pastor, so that people are forced to approach the pastor in these times, the bereaved may not be open to receiving pastoral care if there is no relationship there, as exemplified by Esther’s experience. Not only did Esther not call any pastor when she lost her husband, but all she could remember of the funeral was that she had asked three pastors to participate in the funeral. She vaguely remembered who the pastors were, and she did not remember their roles in the service. She remembered one did the sermon, one did the scripture reading, but could not remember what the last pastor did. When her husband died, it was an unexpected event for which Esther had no plans. Esther had allowed her friend to call her own pastor and had her son plan the funeral with another pastor whom she did not really know. She was not involved in the planning of the funeral and has only a vague recollection of what took place. Now that she has had this experience, she says that when her time comes, she would want only one pastor there: Pastor Peter. She said that she will ask her son to

¹²⁸ Lin, 76.

follow Pastor Peter's guidance for the funeral to have an intimate affair, rather than something that seems more ostentatious.

Continuity, Flexibility and Authenticity in Pastoral Care

It is easy for Taiwanese American Christians to dismiss the need for pastoral care, insisting that they are doing fine, or being unaware of what pastoral care is or how they might be able to benefit from it, as both pastors have experienced. To build relationships with their members, both pastors utilize the tools they have available to them, namely, their experience, their authentic selves, and their trust that they have something to offer in terms of pastoral care. With church members, they share who they are as individuals and demonstrate their abilities as a pastor and leader, both of which allow people to feel seen and heard. What both pastors have in common is that they do not have a "one size fits all" kind of attitude. Rather, they care about the individual and make sure that the uniqueness of the individual and family are taken into account when they are offering pastoral care. This means that they are true to themselves while understanding the cultural and familial context of the people and remaining flexible when they are offering care, whether that is in how they build relationships with people or how they conduct the rituals. At the same time, they use their knowledge of the person and the family and the relationships they have built to guide their pastoral care.

The pastors' ability to be flexible with the care they give helps them extend hospitality to the non-Christians among them. Taiwanese people exist within a diversity of faiths in Taiwan and in the United States as well. As mentioned previously in chapter two, the number of Taiwanese American Christians is less than a quarter of the total Taiwanese population. C.S. Song notes that the "life and history of the peoples and nations of Asia are inseparable from these religions"¹²⁹ unrelated to

¹²⁹ including, but not limited to Buddhism, Confucianism, and Islam

Christianity.”¹³⁰ In my interviews both pastors spoke of working during funerals with people who are not necessarily Christians, and may have cultural mindsets about funerals, such as Pastor Peter’s encounter with the family disagreeing over whether or not to put shoes on the deceased and Pastor James’ accidental faux pas with the arrangement of the flowers. Neither pastor criticized these practices but found ways to acknowledge the importance of these practices and honor them within the context of their faith. Both pastors constantly engage with their authentic selves with the people who come to them asking for care, balancing their faith with care that people need. They navigate pastoral care and funerals with flexibility, keeping their eyes on being fully present to people in need, being open to a new path that allows for our culture and our faith to peacefully co-exist. Through their flexibility, they can address both practical and cultural issues that might come up.

Being Connected

Thus, the funeral is not only about what happens during the ritual itself, but the ongoing relationship, either before or after. That the bereaved would come to a church to ask these particular pastors for assistance means that they already have some sort of relationship with the church and the pastors. The ritual is not memorable if it does not include meaningful connections to the family. In *Caring Through the Funeral: A Pastor’s Guide*, Gene Fowler addresses the importance of offering support for people through the period of time of grief, which extends beyond the funeral service itself. This work that both pastors focus on starts before the deaths even happen, through the relationships with the members of the church that they build as a critical part of their ministry. They have both prioritized providing intentional and on-going pastoral care because they have experienced the reticence of Taiwanese Americans to share their troubles. Through my interviews, I can see the progression of how each pastor developed his form of pastoral care. These pastors were

¹³⁰ C.S. Song, *Third-Eye Theology* (New York: Orbis Books, 1979).

able to build relationships with their congregations in their own ways, allowing for their personalities to shine through and being authentically who they are, and utilizing the tools and support that they have. By being intentional about these relationships and providing the constant care of presence, the members of both Formosa and Taiwan Churches know they can call on their pastors.

Grief can be overwhelming, for the bereaved and for those who care for them. What people tend to do, according to Mitchell and Anderson, is try to manage the emotions, because people “generally have a strong aversion to letting themselves in for the grief, terror, and helplessness of others.”¹³¹ This is the opposite of helpful and comes as a result of people not having done the emotional work themselves. Both pastors, in the interviews, talked about their reflections on their own mortality in the context of their theology, starting from a place of faith in God and trust in God’s promises around life and death. They embody the reformed teaching in the Heidelberg Catechism which states that “I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.... Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.”¹³² Being grounded in such a theological understanding, both Pastors are prepared to be a supportive, caring presence to the bereaved when bad things happen. Pastor Peter recalls the day of the great earthquake in Taiwan on September 21, 1999, when he and his family feared for their lives. He truly felt that he and his family might perish in this earthquake, which led him to reflect on the ephemeral nature of life and the need to depend on God; to be at peace regardless of what happens. Though Pastor James had not shared a near-death experience with me, he, too, talked about the importance of keeping his eyes on God and having faith in God’s promise. In this way, the pastors ensure that

¹³¹ Kenneth R. Mitchell and Herbert Anderson. *All Our Losses, All Our Grievs* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1993), 110.

¹³² Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): Part I, Book of Confessions*, (Louisville: The Office of the General Assembly, 2014), 4.001-.002

the funeral can “proclaim God’s good news of loving presence and future hope”¹³³ and becomes a bridge that connects the grieving to God.

A large part of the experience that pastors bring is the guidance on what to do after a death: how to make arrangements with the funeral homes and schedule the memorial services. While they understand that the mortuary does most of the arrangements, there are still ways that families need guidance to figure out where to start. Knowing the details of the funeral process and planning are important for pastors to know, so that they can be a trusted guide for the bereaved through the process that can sometimes be more commercial than personal, but which they can ensure is a time of presence and support. Thus, this is not simply a time for logistics. By being present at this time, pastors can use this time to help families start the grieving process to begin to make sense of their lives without the deceased. This is a good time for the pastors to learn more about the person and their relationships with others. This is an opportunity for the pastors to hear more personalized stories, rather than what they already know about the deceased. In cases when they may not know the deceased, this is the time the pastors can learn more about them from their family. On the day that Mei passed away, Pastor Peter was there for the family to comfort them, but also to get a sense of what they wanted to do next. “I talked a little bit about the system and what they needed to do and what they need to pay attention to. I mentioned these things so that they would not be caught unaware of what to do next.” This is an important part of how they see their role. Both pastors agree that all the rituals surrounding deaths are about those left behind and less about the deceased. One function of the funeral is “to represent the deceased’s life and death” and involves the story of their own lives and deaths as “a part of the story of God’s story of loving presence and future hope.”¹³⁴ In addition, their stories are linked to the stories of the mourners, affecting each person’s

¹³³ Lee Franklin, *A Pastor’s Practical Guide to Funerals: Offering Help, Assurance, and Hope* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013), 65.

¹³⁴ Franklin, 63.

life, both positively and negatively. The funeral is a time to be intentional about closure and to celebrate the lives of the deceased and connect their lives to the life of the church and its people.

Seeing and Being

Keeping in mind those functions of the funeral, Pastors Peter and James try to create a service that can fulfill all those goals. Pastors Peter and James both understand the complexity of the lives of Taiwanese Americans and are very intentional about being present to those who are struggling so that their congregants know to call in difficult times. In the deaths that happened in their congregations, both pastors have been doing ongoing pastoral care to the families who suffered losses and the deceased themselves during the time of my study. Pastor Peter and his wife had done regular home visits to Mei's family to present a constant, supportive presence. "You have to let them know that you are stable and if things happen, they have someone they can ask," he said. He sees his role as letting them know that he is available, so that "in case something actually happens, they will come to me." He adds that he relies on his wife as an additional source of support, as she can have a different relationship with their members, especially with other women. Both he and the congregation appreciate her presence and acknowledges her role as a pastoral caregiver as well. Indeed, Pastor Peter was the first person that Mei's family called, both on the day the nursing facility thought she was going to die and, on the day, that she did. Similarly, Pastor James had a good relationship with Ming, whose mother was elderly and growing weaker. The church had done their part in visiting her in her nursing facility, making regular visits, even though not as frequently as the care that Pastor James gives to Ming. After he found out his mother had died, Ming called Pastor James immediately. Pastor James was able to provide support and became the only person outside of the immediate family of the deceased to attend the funeral service. Despite knowing that there were conflicts within the family, he refrained from asking questions. Instead, he will continue to provide

pastoral care in time, as he has always done. “Every time we get together, he will tell me a little about his family, so that will be a relief [for him].” This leads to the importance of being in relationship with their members, so that they can give the appropriate care as needed. The funeral of Ming’s mother was not a signal of the end of care for Ming. In fact, Pastor James said he would call Ming a week or so later so that they can get together. This pastoral care is ongoing, regardless of what has transpired, especially since Pastor James knows that there might be more processing that needs to happen. It is noticing these things that builds the trust in the families; allowing people to know that there is no judgement, just support.

Tony Walter noticed that there was a growing number of funerals that were not being performed by clergy, but rather with secular celebrants in England and in the rest of the Western world. His explanation for this phenomenon was that the emphasis of the funeral ritual had become more focused on the person’s life rather than a ritual dictated by liturgy established by the church. For Walter, this demonstrates a move from “heaven to earth”¹³⁵ for funeral services, implying a more secular approach and an approach that focuses on people’s material successes in the world, displaying both “status and personal character: lavish expenditure plus creative personalization, a good send-off that is both material and personal.”¹³⁶ He does not, however, make negative judgments about the way these funerals are performed, but rather believe that they have their own theologies and wonder how the church can respond to this shift. For Pastors Peter and James, it is very important to look at peoples’ lives to honor and uphold them to their families and to the community as well. Pastor Peter speaks of the different aspects of funeral, his focus on each part, and what he wanted people to know about the deceased, connecting the story of the deceased to the greater story of God. Sharing similar sentiments, Pastor James emphasized that the importance of

¹³⁵ Tony Walter, “Judgment, Myth, and Hope in Life-centred Funerals” in *Theology* 119(4): 2016, 253.

¹³⁶ Walter, 254.

the funeral is to help people remember their loved ones, even if he does not know the people. While Pastor James may not be performing funerals for Christians and he wants to be sensitive to the mourners, he also keeps in mind his call to serve God's people through his presence and willingness to be open to what people need in the time of grief; he does not leave behind his faith even as he serves non-Christians. Unlike Walter, who encourages churches to respond to "win back business"¹³⁷ Pastors Peter and James recognizes that pastoral care is about people and their families and communities and offering individualized support and attention helps people feel seen and heard. In the midst of this support, through the personalization of the funeral ritual, they hope that those for whom they care can feel the presence of God and hope that they can frame their grief within the greater story of God. The ritual comes out of the deceased's personhood and life and legacy and "secures memories of the deceased for griever in a tangible way."¹³⁸ In this way, the funeral can be a meaningful event for the mourners while upholding theological understanding, honoring God and God's people in their own context.

Their techniques may differ, but it is important to note that these pastors have worked hard over time, to establish relationships with their congregation, learning about their needs and being present to them when they need support so that when the time comes for a funeral service, the pastors are prepared to help connect the bereaved to the good news of Jesus. To give good pastoral care, the pastors had to use their own expertise and utilize their interests and other tools in their arsenal to find ways for families to trust them and work with them. Without intentionality, they would not have been able to build the kind of rapport they hope. Thus, knowing that there are challenges in building relationship with the congregation, both pastors have done what they could to let their congregations know they are present to them in times of trial and challenges. They have

¹³⁷ Walter, 259.

¹³⁸ Franklin, 73.

both visited and involved the laity to offer care and support as well. Their hard work has paid off, such that even though both women who recently died lived a distance away, from their own homes, both families called the pastors as soon as they found out their loved one had died. In fact, Pastor James even arrived at the nursing facility before the family on the night of the death of his elder's mother. Therefore, while there might be other barriers such as distance, the desire to save face, or the unwillingness to be a burden or share their struggles, if a relationship exists, people will feel more comfortable turning to the pastor when things happen.

Geographic Challenges and Pastoral Care

Having a relationship with God and the pastor does not necessitate a relationship with God's people. Yet, being a part of the church and having a relationship God's people provides an important aspect of support. As discussed previously, sociological studies have found that socially, emotionally, and spiritually the immigrant church serves a bigger purpose than simply a worship space. The people in the church encompass so much more; the church is like a family not just because that is the instruction of Christ, but because it is also a reality of many immigrants, who leave behind their families and friends to pursue a new life in the United States. In both churches, people addressed each other as "sister" and "brother." Both pastors mentioned the importance of the church during times of grief, which are involved in the support of each other, and both pastors mobilize their churches, whether in regard to lay leadership or parishioners to offer care in addition to what they themselves do. The pastors have the humility to understand that they are not merely representing themselves, but the church and God and that the care given should be done by the whole body, rather than as a task done by the pastors alone. The involvement of lay leaders and the congregations in the giving of pastoral care demonstrates the influence of reformed theology and the community acting as family in caring for each other.

For the purposes of my analysis, I call Formosa an “affinity church” because the majority of their members live in different areas from each other and also a great distance from the church, but continue to worship and attend this church because of a shared affinity, which is their Taiwanese identity and culture, and because of the connection they have developed through time. Since the majority of the members had started going to the church when they first arrived in Los Angeles, they have chosen to continue to attend this church, despite where their lives have taken them around Southern California. Even Pastor Peter lives about an hour away, possibly more with the horrendous traffic. Pastor Peter recognized that their location has been a difficult topic for the church, as the church has spent the better part of a decade discussing the possibility of moving locations to better serve its members. For the purposes of pastoral care, especially, this has been a challenge for both lay leaders and congregation members. It can be logistically impossible for church members to be present even if they have the time to give pastoral care because traffic is so unreasonable.

On the other hand, this distance is also a challenge for people seeking care, as they may not want to be a burden on others, knowing how difficult it would be to navigate traffic and to get support quickly. Though Pastor Peter does live far from the church, he works from home and remains available to travel when the need arises. He does acknowledge that the distance can prove challenging, especially for his elders, who have the specific responsibility to care for the congregation. While he cannot change the physical distance between himself, the church, and the parishioners, what Pastor Peter can do is to establish a close, caring relationship so that each family knows that he is always open and happy to receive calls from them when something happens. This is the reason it is so important for him to build relationships with the families; to help them feel more comfortable with calling him.

Pastor Peter has been building his relationship with Mei's family for some time, knowing that she was in the last stage of life. In the days prior to her recent death, Mei's family had called Pastor Peter to tell him that she was not doing well. He immediately responded to the notice by calling the elders in the church to inform them and got ready to leave to pay them a visit. One elder was at work, one lived about two hours away due to traffic, but one was able to go with him to visit the family. This means that while people may live far away from the church, they do not necessarily live far away from each other. Pastor Peter sees the historic and central role that the elders have at Formosa Church. Even if they do not always have the flexibility to respond to situations that come up, they all see the importance of lay leaders performing pastoral care. At Formosa Church and for Pastor Peter, pastoral care is about a partnership between the pastor and lay leaders.

While Esther had never stopped attending Formosan Church on Sundays and even served as an elder for a time, Formosa Church was almost an hour away from her home. She did not even call her pastor until the next day. Even Esther, when prompted, admitted that there were fellow church members who lived nearby whom she had simply not thought to call. These nearby people could have come to support her quickly should she had called. The problem was not that Esther did not want to call the church because it was too far, but that she did not have the relationship with them that allowed her to feel she could or should call.

Meanwhile, as a church that is built around the community where it exists and where people live close to each other, Taiwan Church has a different approach to pastoral care. The members of this church do not have to worry about the physical distance between them, giving them the opportunity to participate. Taiwan Church, having always had pastoral leadership, has the culture that depends on the work of the pastor to take the lead when it comes to providing pastoral care. Pastor James does not always call on the elders of Taiwan Church to do as much as the Elders do at Formosa Church, because Pastor James looks at each individual and their relationship with

others in the church so that he can contact their friends and provide more intimate support. He may or may not call an elder of the church, depending on the person who needs help. From the stories and experiences of my interviewees, it seems that pastoral care is a task of God, as a peaceful presence that fulfills the promise of our faith. This is the emphasis of each interviewee.

However, even though they may not recognize pastoral care done by human beings, through the stories, I can see that every person does provide pastoral care: the pastor, lay leaders, and members alike. Each person is called to share his or her gift that can be used in giving authentic care and support. Esther recalled that on the evening her husband passed away, she had contacted “a sister” from her husband’s church, who had helped her with caring for her husband in the past. Rather than coming by herself, this sister called other members of the church, including the pastor of that church. People, including the pastor, came throughout the early morning. She reported that she did not feel that she needed anything, including any pastoral care that evening, since she felt that God was with her and she had peace throughout the evening. Yet, she remembers that someone had started playing hymns on the piano and everyone who was there joined in with singing until the mortuary came to get his body. This act of care has stayed with her while other details may have faded away, which demonstrates the impact that this had on her, even if she did not identify it as a form of pastoral care.

Likewise, Paul, too, mentioned that the care he and his wife received were “practical. It wasn’t the Word.” Yet, in our conversation, Paul shared many practical aspects of care that he and his wife had received, both in people’s concern for him and his wife and some of more practical aspects of support that helped him in a tough time. He spoke about the visits by the church elders from Taiwan Church and the healthy foods they brought to his wife, hoping that eating well would help prolong her life. When he spoke about the care that he and his wife received, there was a surprised tone, as though he did not expect any kind of care at all because he is a pastor himself. He

said that it was not about the pastor caring for his congregation, but the congregation caring for the pastor. He remembered that the congregation came, and as a group. Further, it was not just about his wife, but they also took care of him. As the pastors reflected on providing good pastoral care, they also emphasized the importance of holistic care for the entire family, rather than just the person who has the problem.

Pastoral care may be led by the pastor, as the leader of the church, and a part of the pastor's job requirement, but it is not solely their responsibility. Rather, the work of care is done by the whole church, as seen in both of my interviews. The pastors may be the conduit that connects the people, but they are intentional about including the greater church as well, reminding the people and the lay leadership that the work of care is shared by all of God's people. Moreover, people may not always understand what pastoral care is or even the importance of it. This can even extend to pastors. While he is much more intentional about doing pastoral care now, Pastor James said very candidly about just starting out in his ministry, "In the past, I was just like, oh okay, nobody has a problem. Oh, that's good. What's the big deal? I thought ministry was just doing church things. But the farther more you go, they will tell you more." As a young and newly ordained pastor, Pastor James did not realize that the congregation might have been struggling with personal problems that they never bothered to share with him, but instead put on a happy face at church. Admittedly, he did not focus on pastoral care until he started wanting to learn more about how his congregation was growing spiritually under his leadership. Once he began asking for reflections, he came to realize that they were not doing as well on the inside as they appeared on the outside. Intimacy, then, is built not only on the ethnic tie, but also with hard work. This is very appreciated by the recipients of care, whether or not they feel that they need care or understand what pastoral care entails. While people may not always consider the importance of the church and its members as a unit, when asked to reflect on how they have been cared for, neither of the members mentioned their pastor. Rather,

they mentioned the care they received from the elder and the other members of the church to which they belong. In response to needs, the church community responded in a thoughtful way to offer pastoral care to people who need it.

Overall, research on the functions of immigrant congregations cast a positive light on ethnic congregations and the functions they serve for the community. I have found in my research that the church is indeed more than a place of worship. Instead, the church is a family where people can find support and belonging. Immigrant and ethnic congregations become a new kinship network for immigrants who have come to this country, even if the majority of Taiwanese Americans are white collar workers who make a good income and are able to speak English. The connections people make at church is so deep that it goes beyond geographical boundaries and people find it worthwhile to travel hours to spend time together. For non-members or even non-Christians, the church can still be a community they look to for support and guidance, especially when they experience loss or encounter other problems in their lives. Yet, the relationships that are formed may or may not be as deep as people might think, as the paradoxical nature of Taiwanese Americans and their communal culture may pressure people to conform to what already exists. The churches may seem to be very homogenous because people are uncomfortable sharing their differences with each other in fear that they may lose their community. Nonetheless, both pastors have shown in their relationships with Ming and Mei that they are trustworthy and willing to maintain confidentiality, all while finding ways to bring support to these families.

While the hope is that the whole church will be able to provide support and care for its members, this is not always possible, as Pastor Peter pointed out. Geographic issues such as distance and time constraints stand in the way of the church's ability to manage the pastoral care on their own. Emotional and cultural issues such as saving face, being stoic and private makes it harder for people to open up, share their problems, and ask for help. Additionally, people may not even

recognize that care is necessary because they believe they have a strong faith and God will deliver them from their struggles.

Culture and the Church

Organizations do not spring out of nowhere. There is always a purpose and they are “created because one or more individuals perceive that the coordinated and concerted action of a number of people can accomplish something that individual action cannot.”¹³⁹ In a lot of ways, Formosa Church and Taiwan Church are very different from each other even though they are both Taiwanese Churches in Southern California. Pastors Peter and James not only have different ways of performing pastoral care, but they also differ in how they, and perhaps their churches, see their roles when it comes to pastoral care. While both Pastors start with a relationship, with the congregation and the individual members, part of the wisdom and leadership they provide is their recognition that this is the work of the whole community. While the pastors are the main care providers, their role is also to alert and coordinate the logistics of the whole church community caring for people. Yet, with each of these churches, the structure in place for pastoral care and the expectations for the lay leadership and members are unique to their congregation. This is because each church has its own individual culture that differs even from another Taiwanese American immigrant church in the same geographic area. Both pastors are able to navigate the cultures of their churches to be accepted and respected leaders in their church and work together with its members to provide pastoral care. It is, then, important to look at the culture of the church to better understand how people, especially pastors, can fit in and be effective working within. Of course, there can be sub-cultures within a greater culture, but for my purposes of building relationships and providing pastoral care, I will focus only on the larger church culture.

¹³⁹ Schein, 226.

Culture can be difficult to define, but important to identify. Culture is a “shared meaning system... and it includes the knowledge that people need to have in order to function effectively in their social environment.”¹⁴⁰ Culture cannot be dictated and managed by the leader. Rather, culture and leadership are “two sides of the same coin; neither can really be understood by itself.”¹⁴¹ This means that culture defines and shapes leadership, even as leaders shape and manage culture. This is the challenge of between being successful and unsuccessful. For the pastors, it is not just about understanding the culture of the church and people in providing pastoral care but applies to being a leader in the church. The culture of a place is not always obvious or taught to new members of a group. While there are some aspects of culture that can be seen on the surface, what is at the heart of the culture is not revealed to newcomers. Unless leaders “become conscious of the cultures in which they are embedded, those cultures will manage them.”¹⁴² As Pastor Peter said, “when [people] come to church, they become family. Their relationship is very deep and intimate. For the pastor to come in, the pastor is a stranger. You have to build a relationship that is equally intimate and good, but that is hard.” He understands that there is something more than just showing up and stepping into the role of the pastor when he comes to work; he has to find a way into this family so that he can do what he was called to do. For Schein, to understand culture, one must try to understand the “shared basic assumptions and ...the learning process by which such basic assumptions come to be.”¹⁴³ While neither Pastor Peter nor Pastor James explicitly talked about their understanding of culture, based on the interviews that I conducted, they are both very observant about the way their churches function and very thoughtful about how they engage the church as pastor leaders, to get at the deeper levels of the culture of individuals and the church.

¹⁴⁰ Henry Triandis, *The Analysis of Subjective Culture* (Oxford: Wiley, 2002), 16.

¹⁴¹ Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco: Wiley, 2004), 10.

¹⁴² Schein, 23.

¹⁴³ Schein, 36.

Culture is based on a group of people and how they interact; with each member of the group behaving a certain way in order to belong to the group. This means that even if they do not subscribe to everything the group believes, they will nonetheless participate, because membership in the group is more important. For Taiwanese American, there are two, sometimes three, cultures at work: Taiwanese, American, and, for some, Japanese. Unfortunately, as K. Samuel Lee has observed, in “this society, one must choose, whether voluntarily or involuntarily and whether consciously or unconsciously, ways to identify himself or herself with their traditional and often devalued ethnic culture or with the esteemed American culture,”¹⁴⁴ where the American culture is seen as the norm. Being able to navigate this cultural difference can be the difference between success and failure in the new society.

All groups begin through an “originating event”¹⁴⁵ that can begin one of three ways. For the Taiwanese American Church, the originating event began with a “common experience that attracts a number of individuals.”¹⁴⁶ The gathering of Taiwanese American Christians had not only been for religious purposes, but to create a community of co-ethnics in the United States. Ultimately, culture comes from the “beliefs, values, and assumptions of founders of the organizations, the learning experiences of group members as their organization evolves, and new beliefs, values, and assumptions brought in by new members and leaders.”¹⁴⁷ The most influential of these, however, are the founding members, who shaped the group and established its mission when it started. Thus, the culture of a church begins with the people who gathered to form it, and the previous experiences such as assumptions, rules, and expectations they had with churches, both in the United States and

¹⁴⁴ K. Samuel Lee, “Navigating between Cultures: The Bicultural Family’s Lived Realities.” In *Mutuality Matters: Family, Faith, and Just Love*, eds. Herbert Anderson, Edward Foley, Bonnie Miller-McLemore, and Robert Schreiter (Langham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004), 108-109.

¹⁴⁵ Schein, 64.

¹⁴⁶ Schein, 64.

¹⁴⁷ Schein, 225.

in Taiwan. The individual members will have to develop within the group an identity, what their needs and goals are, how that will be met and who will belong. The cohesion of the group, then, “develops only as members begin genuinely to understand each other’s needs, goals, talents, and values, and as they begin to integrate these into a shared mission.”¹⁴⁸ When this happens, people become emotionally attached to and invested in the group. The leader of the group, who can be an outsider, is evaluated upon the successful management of this mission, failing which, he or she will be dismissed. To do this, leaders must always be willing to reflect and learn to improve upon themselves, their knowledge of the culture, and their ability to function within it, none which can be forced. Having this drive helps Pastors Peter and James be successful leaders in their churches, as well as good pastoral caregivers to the people.

Formosa Church

As I ate lunch with the members of Formosa Church, the pastor pointed out, as an example, how far many of these elderly members commute to attend church every week. Many of these elders dedicate hours in the car to come to church on Sundays because this has been their church since they first arrived in the United States and this is their family. Over the lunch fellowship, one woman said that she had attempted to go to another Taiwanese church closer to her home, but it just did not feel the same. To her, Formosa Church represented an openness and generosity for their members. After a few attempts of going to other churches, she returned to Formosa Church permanently even though she and her husband had to drive close to an hour to get here. Formosa Church understands the geographic challenges of their church and is very intentional about overcoming this on Sundays.

¹⁴⁸ Schein, 67.

During my visits to Formosa Church, their lunch fellowship, the “love meal,” stood out to me. Having been to numerous Taiwanese American churches, it was surprising to me that there was such an abundance of food for lunch. Unlike other churches that orders just enough, Formosa Church purposely orders more food than the congregation can possibly eat. Instead of using regular paper plates, Formosa Church congregation bring and use large glass storage containers. There is enough for people to eat and be full, but also enough for leftovers. Pastor Peter explained that because they are aware that their members live far away, they wanted to make sure that people were fed so that they can spend time at the church. Because people live far away from the church and possibly even far away from their friends, Formosa Church wants to be the space that its members can hang out. When there are afternoon events at the church, a full stomach can encourage people to stay. According to Pastor Peter, the church hopes that they will have provided enough sustenance for members whose commute is an hour or two, but also makes sure that there is enough food so that members who do not want to cook at home has enough for another meal, especially because there are many members who are elderly. This meal is a way that Formosa Church cares for its members and this spirit of generosity has been a way to help members feel connected. This simple act allows Formosa Church members to feel that the church considers their context and is supportive of their presence at the church. This meal allows for members to participate without worrying about being hungry and allows members to know that the church is happy to provide a service to them to make their day easier.

This is a church with an independent culture that looks to its lay leadership, especially the elders, with the tasks of running a church. There is an elder whose role is the “caring elder,” meant to provide care for members of the church and the elders rotate each month as the elder to contact in case people, both members and non-members, need a contact person. The majority of its members do not live geographically close to the church as it is now but began attending the church

when they either lived closer to the church or when it was one of the only Taiwanese American Presbyterian Churches available to them in the Southern California region. Even after there were more local churches available or after people moved away, they have found reasons to continue to worship and participate in the life of Formosa Church. During the meal, Pastor Peter said to me, “most of these people you see here, even though they are elderly, said one member to me, live at least 30 minutes away by car, without traffic!” Additionally, a long-time member of the church told me that she lives more than 30 minutes away but continues to attend Formosa Church after several decades of being there. She said she had contemplated leaving the church and attempted to go to a church closer to her, but she did not feel a sense of belonging there. She did not feel that they were very generous with their resources and did not feel that it was the right place for her and her family. She had gone to the church only a handful of times before returning to Formosa Church for good, never considering leaving it again.

When it comes to care given outside the church, being what I call an affinity church, where its members do not live within the vicinity of the church, the pastor and the lay leaders must take the lead and be the flexible presence who is able to visit families as things are happening, since it may not be possible for members to take on this responsibility with all the other obligations they have in their lives. The members of the church understood this reality as well and nobody in the church expects either the caring elder or the elder in charge to always be the first point of contact and drop everything when situations arise. As Esther said about the night when her husband died, “everyone was 40-50 minutes away. I didn’t think about [calling] anyone at [Formosa] Church.” Yet, now that Pastor Peter has been at this church for six years, she has admitted that she would call him should something happen in her life and she needed support. While Pastor Peter and the congregation expects that he will get the first call, Pastor Peter still understands the reality of the culture of Formosa Church. He understands that the leadership of this church lies in the elders and it is

important to keep them in the loop and work with them, rather than doing all the care himself.

Pastor Peter engages the elders through requests of administrative and logistical assistance, having them make phone calls and through representation at rituals, such as funerals. Even if the family does not explicitly invite the elders to participate in the care, Pastor Peter does, and the elders who are available, will respond.

When Mei died, her family contacted Pastor Peter right away and he was able to respond to their call. However, he had let the family know that he would inform the elders of this news as well even though he did not expect the elders to head over to visit the family. Instead, he asked for their prayers and assistance with logistics. Later, with the funeral service, he insisted on inviting the elders, a few of whom attended. Even though this was an example of the elders and pastor working together to provide care at a funeral, the elders also try their best to be present to people. Pastor Peter told me a story about a church sister who owns an inn and is not always able to attend church on a regular basis. Nonetheless, she considered Formosa Church her spiritual home and comes when she can and contributes as she is able. Recently, Pastor Peter, on one of his regular visits with her, discovered that this woman's son had died. She did not tell the church and had quietly taken care of his funeral and burial. Soon after the visit, he informed the elders of the church of this news, and the elders gathered together after church the next Sunday and paid this woman a visit to offer their condolences and prayers. For Pastor Peter, having this kind of working relationship with the elders not only provides people with more well-rounded support from the church, but also builds his relationship with them as he demonstrates his willingness to work with them and his respect for them. It is little surprise that Pastor Peter, who works under a contract, sailed through the renewal of his contract when his first term of three years was up.

Taiwan Church

Taiwan Church has a similar ambiance as Formosa Church on the surface. They seem very similar, with a similar liturgy and even a similar fellowship time after worship. Here, I noticed when I sat down to worship, an overzealous greeter met us with enthusiasm. She handed us a copy of the sermon in Chinese, in case we did not understand Taiwanese. For my husband, who does not read Chinese, she gave him an English Bible. She handed us a form to fill out for visitors. This form not only asked for our personal and contact information, but also asked if we might need assistance with anything. With this question on the form, it seems as though the church is acknowledging the role it might plays in filling the needs of people who are coming. Moreover, it is possible that because the members of Taiwan Church live within the community where the church exists, there is more ability by the church to offer support to people and families.

Unlike Formosa Church, because of its founding and leadership by a pastor, Taiwan Church is a church that is used to having its pastor in charge of the church and in charge of its care. While the church does have elders, deacons, and other leadership positions available, pastoral guidance is respected and expected at Taiwan Church. The elders have always had a leader they can depend on, rather than having to figure out how to run the church on their own, so they are happy to follow Pastor James' lead. While there are elders in the church that assist him, as well as a full-time church secretary, there is no official caring elder role. Pastor James performs much of the pastoral care of the church on his own, which he does as he has developed ways to help his members become open to him when needs arise.

For example, when Ming's mother died, Pastor James knew he wanted privacy. He did make an announcement in the church service and on the bulletin for prayers but did not extend the invitation to participate in any part of the funeral to anyone else in the church. This did not seem to be a problem in Taiwan Church, as people in the church trusted Pastor James to provide the care. However, this does not mean that Pastor James is the only one that gives pastoral care. Instead,

Pastor James determines who the best people are in the congregation to offer the care and approaches them with the request for visit and follow up. When Pastor James asks people to offer pastoral care, they are happy to help. Since Taiwan Church is a tight-knit community, where members live close to each other, people tend to be more involved in each other's' lives. Yet there are also times when people come up to Pastor James to ask what they can do. He is then able to assign tasks for them as requested. This is an important aspect of pastoral care for Taiwan Church—the reliability of the community to reach out to others. Pastor James says that the majority of his members are elderly, and they have no other community. Their families may be very busy with other life and work issues, “so our elderly—this is their only community that they can rely on.” Because of this, members are all willing to participate in the care of the whole community. Many times, when things happen, individuals will approach Pastor James to ask him what he thinks they can do. When this happens, Pastor James will guide the individuals to offer care for their fellow member. This means that people are always looking out for each other, even when it does not seem to be a crisis. For example, there is a member who collects scraps from the lunch meal that she uses as compost for her garden. When I was eating lunch, she asked me for my scraps and someone sitting next to her helpfully explained to me about the garden. She also went around helping gather other people's scraps for the gardener.

Culture and Funerals

Formosa and Taiwan Church each has its own culture and context that shapes their dynamics and behavior. Being able to see the culture of each church has helped me understand how each pastor is suited for his post and how each has been successful in providing leadership and care. Churches, especially those that have been in existence for decades, as each of these churches has been, have strong cultures. Having a strong culture means that people feel the pressure to conform.

A part of what makes culture work is the story, because the story helps people better understand what the culture is. People “tell stories to gain power and influence—and because they enjoy doing it.”¹⁴⁹ In the stories, people learn about expected behaviors and reveal the values of the institution, which serves to preserve the institution. This is especially true for the church, as Christianity is about the story of God and the story of God’s people. Human beings are always interpreting our experiences in an effort to find meaning and purpose in our lives. Practical theology, especially, starts with our experiences believing that our faith is not just about our beliefs, but about living out those beliefs. Experience is a “‘place’ where the gospel is grounded, embodied, interpreted and lived out. It is an interpretive context which raises new questions, offers challenges and demands answers of the gospel.”¹⁵⁰ This is for both the bereaved whom I interviewed and the pastors as well. Each person I interviewed had unique stories to tell, about who they are, who God is, and what the church is. Death is “the most intense form of relationship loss,”¹⁵¹ where there is an ending of “opportunities to relate oneself to, talk with, share experiences with, make love to, touch settle issues with, fight with, and otherwise be in the emotional and/or physical presence of a particular other human being.”¹⁵² Death requires people to reflect on their relationship with the deceased, trying to come to terms with all the emotions and issues they have not processed in the past, both individually, but perhaps with family as well. Their stories provide insight into the churches and into pastoral care and when one “understands the culture, then stories can be used to enhance that understanding and make it concrete.”¹⁵³ The funeral is a time of story-telling, not only about the deceased and their family, but about God and how we fit into the greater story of God.

¹⁴⁹ Terrence E. Deal and Allan A. Kennedy, *Corporate Cultures: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life* (New York: Perseus Books: 2000), 87.

¹⁵⁰ John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM Press, 2006), 5-6.

¹⁵¹ Mitchell and Anderson, 38.

¹⁵² Mitchell and Anderson, 37-38.

¹⁵³ Schein, 269.

In addition to stories, rituals provide an important aspect of understanding culture. For authors Deal and Kennedy, strong organizations always have important rites and rituals that help participants better understand the organization's culture.¹⁵⁴ There are several functions of rituals that give it meaning. Rituals are used in difficult times so that people might come together around the chaos in an orderly way. Additionally, rituals can also frame a time so that it can "reveal the extraordinary character of everyday existence."¹⁵⁵ Lastly, rituals "reenact significant stories" that can help people remember the past, bring the past into the present, and help frame a way to move forward into the future.¹⁵⁶ The funeral itself is a ritual that occurs in the church and demonstrates what is important to the pastors and to the people and is a way to understand how people mourn, find closure, and remember the deceased. This ritual is a way for pastors to give pastoral care and for people to receive it. Both the planning and the performing of the funeral are ways that Pastors Peter and James offer pastoral care to their members. Rituals provide a context for which people have permission to share their feelings and questions. They can also help temporarily unify a group of people who may not be able to get along very well to lament together a loss they all share.¹⁵⁷ Performing funeral services is an important service and a part of providing pastoral care for people. It provides a context for the acting out of "the depth of loss and grief in the aftermath of such events."¹⁵⁸ Storytelling and ritual are interconnected and comes together to offer a profound experience in the pastoral care of the funeral.

Funeral as Ritual

¹⁵⁴ Deal and Kennedy, 86.

¹⁵⁵ Long, *Accompany Them with Singing: The Christian Funeral*, 100.

¹⁵⁶ Long, *Accompany Them with Singing: The Christian Funeral*, 101.

¹⁵⁷ Ewan Kelly, *Meaningful Funerals: Meeting the Theological and Pastoral Challenge in a Post-modern Era* (London: Mowbray, 2008), 25-26.

¹⁵⁸ Kelly, 25

Even though the mortuary has all the logistics mostly in place for a family after death, the pastors' knowledge and guidance can be helpful as a third party who is there for the family rather than as a part of the business of death. After all, mortuaries do not have a personal relationship with families but are a business which can sometimes present a conflict of interest, because their ultimate goal is to make money from the service they provide. Through their guidance, the funeral planning can become a part of the healing process. Using their experience with funerals and with people, the pastors are able to guide families in mourning. Dealing with the mortuary and making the funeral and burial arrangements can be a burden on the families, and the pastors are there to assist in these details to relieve the stress they might feel. Pastor Peter mentioned this as an important part of pastoral care for his members, telling them about the business of mortuaries. Likewise, Pastor James also offers this kind of logistical assistance for families, including helping non-members and even non-Christians navigate death arrangements. As the pastor of a community church, Pastor James performs about three funerals a year, some for non-members. Sometimes, the service will be for friends of members or their families. This means that while he may have a connection to the deceased, he is not always intimately familiar with them. This means that the deceased or their families may not even be Christian but come for assistance because they know that Taiwan Church is a community they can trust who is willing to help them. Pastor James understands that he and Taiwan Church are a resource for many people who may not have elsewhere to turn. Regardless, he spoke about the process, of which, guidance is a part.

After the logistics are settled with the funeral homes and the families have figured out a time and place for the funeral, the pastors will assist the families in organizing the memorial service or the funeral service. This can sometimes be a challenge because there are differences in customs,

traditions, and other practices that make funerals unique.¹⁵⁹ *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling* describes the funeral as a “worship service or public ritual marking of the death of an individual”¹⁶⁰ and speaks to the impact the funeral has on mourning. The funeral is a transitional stage that is a part of the ongoing grief work and helps give meaning to death as a rite of passage. Though it is a rite of passage, the ritual itself is a multi-faceted process, rather than just a singular event. Having a ritual that follows a death helps address people’s need to create meaning and purpose that uses “symbols and language... [that] enables the expression or action out of feelings and their struggle to find understanding.”¹⁶¹ Mourning and grieving take place before, during, and after the funeral service. There are also many different parts to the funeral, including viewing, burial or cremation, and the memorial service. Families will want to arrange something with the mortuary that can mark the occasion of the death of their loved one, logistical details that require attention. While this is a task for the mortuaries, both pastors spoke about the importance of offering guidance for families while they navigate a death, to help them with the logistics. Furthermore, both pastors are actively engaged in helping families plan the funeral, in addition to the logistics, not in an intrusive or dominant way, but in a careful and sensitive way, understanding that the priority is to provide care for the families. They understand that the funeral can be an opportunity for the families to feel the embrace of the whole church community and to witness to the promise of God in life and in death.¹⁶²

The funeral is a “ritual of ending”¹⁶³ that is a part of grieving, playing an important role in the life and transition of a family. This is a time when people can come together to remember the

¹⁵⁹ Rodney J. Hunter, “Funeral” in *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 450.

¹⁶⁰ Hunter, 450.

¹⁶¹ Kelly, 24.

¹⁶² Mitchell and Anderson, 142.

¹⁶³ Mitchell and Anderson, 142.

community that is around them. This ritual should be able to include elements of remembrance of the deceased, but also be consistent with Christian theology and values. While there are generic Presbyterian liturgies, in both English and Chinese, neither pastor sticks to the prewritten liturgies. Instead, they use their own theological and liturgical understanding to create a liturgy that is fitting for the person, the family, and the context. Pastors Peter and James both require flexibility in funeral planning so that care they can offer closure, celebrate memories, and help people with their grieving, striving to make the services as relatable to the families as possible. Both spoke about being able to include the songs and scriptures that were meaningful to the deceased, and to use the time of the memorial to honor the life of the deceased. These are the goals the pastors have, yet, they understand this is not the priority. For the pastors, it is all about offering care in the particular context of the family for whom they care. Each family is different, and they are intentional about trying to understand each family and comfort them as best as they can in their own context as they try to be involved with the families before the deaths come to pass. With the relationships they have built in their effort to be present for the families before things even happen. In both cases, with Ming and Mei, both pastors had been involved with the families previously, conducting regular visits and check-ins. Both pastors had built good relationships with the families and were aware of the strained relationships within the family and knew that pastoral care given had to be tailored to the realities of the family. The ways of honoring the deceased in the funeral service has to do with the selection and order of the liturgy and the use of stories to bring about hope and life, which is why the eulogy is a central part of the funeral services that both pastors conduct and why they choose passages of scriptures and hymns that were favorites of the deceased.

Storytelling

Stories are a “hallmark of human experience”¹⁶⁴ that gives our lives meaning and are a way that we understand ourselves and the world around us. We nurture these stories through pastoral care and help people weave their stories with the stories of God.¹⁶⁵ In a funeral service, the pastors are trying to help the participants to see the deceased person as they are, presenting different aspects of the deceased. This is done through the sharing of stories from different family members throughout the service, weaving the stories of the deceased with the stories of God. This is yet another part of the pastoral care that requires exercising flexibility in the care and the liturgy, allowing the bereaved to grieve in the way that is authentic to who they are. The pastors use the services to reflect the deceased and the family to honor them and offer comfort to them. Both pastors are willing to personalize their interaction with the deceased when they create the liturgy of the service to celebrate and remember the life and work of the deceased, rather than sticking to a generic liturgy or service in a way that helps the family gather, mourn, and find closure. For both pastors, it is important to keep in mind that this the best way to offer care. Neither pastor uses the liturgies set by the denomination. Rather, through their years of conducting funerals, they have come up with liturgies that work for them and for the bereaved, offering people what they need in the moment, especially in the times when they are not asked ahead of time to provide a service, as Pastor James described with Ming’s family. In the moment of the cremation, he had to come up with a service that would be helpful to Ming and his family, but not one that was pre-planned and highly liturgical. In some ways, the academic texts are helpful because they give advice on how to work with families to create a meaningful funeral. In practice, there may not always be time for pastors to have these conversations, because families are not always clear on what they want. In

¹⁶⁴ Moschella, 5.

¹⁶⁵ Moschella, 216.

these cases, pastors will have to take the lead and guide the families through the funeral through their own experience and knowledge of the family.

Ipgrave notes that dying has become more private and isolated from our daily lives, but there is a desire for the funeral to be more personal, as Walter has observed. For him, the sermon is important and must be preached so that the gospel can be shared in the context of the deceased, in a service.¹⁶⁶ Yet, for Pastor James, the sermon is the least important part of the service, especially for those in the community who come to him for assistance in times of death. “A lot of times you don’t know the person. You don’t know who that is or only very basic friend with that guy. So the message is off sometimes.” Pastor Peter adds that the funeral service is not a “standard process because you have to see the differences in the people and their families.” He sees each and every deceased person as his own family member and tries to imagine the loss as his own, emphasizing that each person is different, and each time is different. This means that the various parts in the funeral liturgy are not solely at the discretion of the pastor. Rather, both pastors reach out to the family to make sure that their family is agreeable with the order, music, contents, Scriptures, and any other parts to the liturgy that is included. It is also for the family to determine who will participate in the service itself. For Mei’s memorial service, Pastor Peter was careful to ensure everything was chosen to reflect not only the deceased, but the family as well.

The selection of favorite music and Scripture passages can enlighten people to understand a person’s faith and beliefs and also be meaningful for family and friends. Both the scholarship and the lived experience of the pastors have found that music and scripture are important elements of pastoral care during funerals. Keeping this in mind, pastors should use these resources to anchor the funeral by using favorite scriptures and music to establish a connection not only with the deceased, but to better understand their connection with God. Pastor Peter encouraged Mei’s granddaughter

¹⁶⁶ Ipgrave, 223.

to read Mei's favorite Scripture passage in Taiwanese as the Scripture. In this way she was able to represent the family and honor her grandmother. The choirs that sang in the service and the musicians had the space to choose songs they felt would best honor her. Likewise, at her cremation Pastor James and Ming sang the songs that were his mother's favorites.

The importance of songs cannot be overstated in a funeral. Music can be powerful and has "long been a key part of the human rituals and ceremonies which accompany significant events and situations in people's lives."¹⁶⁷ It provides meaning for people, especially in the life of the church and the funeral. Furthermore, music evokes emotions that can be profound and can be a conduit for emotions that engage people, helping them through challenging times. People can use music to "create a particular mood or to shift their emotional state, and thus they engage in emotional work."¹⁶⁸ This is the same for individuals and groups, as people can collectively respond to music in similar ways. In fact, this is how both pastors see and utilize music, especially hymns. Music is such an intrinsic part of providing care that Pastor Peter makes sure that at every point where he is asked to pray, he includes a hymn. In fact, he understood music to be so important that he made sure that the family of the deceased in this recent memorial service invited not just Formosa Church's choir, but the choir of another church to sing at this church as a way to honor her life and legacy. The deceased was instrumental in the creation of that church, and Pastor Peter wanted to offer the choir a chance to offer a blessing for the family through song. For Pastor James, "music is tied to reflecting. It's all... poetry that the deceased liked. So when they sing the music, the music itself is comforting and at the same time, the family has good memories of the person who passed away." These aspects of the faith really bring comfort to people. Regardless of how public or private the services are, when the pastors are with the families at these times of grief, hymns are always a part of

¹⁶⁷ Glenys Caswell "Beyond Words: Some Uses of Music in the Funeral Setting" in *Omega* 64(4): 2011, 320.

¹⁶⁸ Caswell, 324.

the ritual, as well as Scripture, prayers, and stories of the deceased. The music especially allows for the mourners to reflect and be comforted by the memories that the music can evoke. Ming brought his mother's favorite hymns, and the choirs and musicians chose songs they felt would honor Mei. In this way, both pastors are utilizing sacred music to help the mourners come together and grieve, sharing the mourning.¹⁶⁹

As much as he can, Pastor James will use the sermon to reflect on the life of the deceased. Pastor James describes the eulogy as a time where a close member “share[s] about the family and it brings the family together.... They share the good things: the last good journey. They say goodbye. It is very comforting most of the time.” This is one of the most important aspects of a funeral, and it is something that he encourages the family to do. Similarly, Pastor Peter takes the time to think about each aspect of the funeral to plan for what his message will be. “For the viewing, the focus is more about the relationship of the family. For the memorial service, it is their relationship with the church.” These are opportunities for the pastors to say a few words to connect the deceased with the greater story of God and an opportunity for them to share more about the person, to honor their lives and their legacies. This is the same reason that Pastor Peter strongly encouraged Mei's family to write and include a biography in the funeral bulletin. He also encouraged them to read it as a part of the memorial service because he felt that it would be helpful for both the family and for everyone in attendance to hear about who she was, perhaps reminding them that she is a multi-faceted person, as they remember her life.

The funerals, however, are not just about the people, because Christian rituals are also about God and our faith as well. The funeral is the gospel “reenacted in dramatic form [that] comes to particular focus around the occasion of a death.”¹⁷⁰ This is a thought that is always in the back of the

¹⁶⁹ Caswell, 328.

¹⁷⁰ Thomas G. Long, *Accompany Them with Singing: The Christian Funeral* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 78.

pastors' minds as they work to help people understand and connect to the greater God-story and humanity. When there is a death, Pastor Peter remembers for himself that life is fleeting, so he wants "people to have a Christian understanding of life and death. Any time [death happens] is good. Any time God takes us is a blessing. God calling us is the biggest hope and blessing for any person." This is the concept that he hopes to instill in mourners to comfort them and to share with them the life-giving nature of the Christian Gospel. In providing pastoral care at funerals, Pastor James echoes this sentiment, wanting to share with the bereaved who are Christians the message of hope; that even though we are always getting closer to the end of our lives, "we are walking on this journey. We are closer to God daily, so we need to do what we need to do—what God calls us to do, daily." This message is always a delicate balance for both pastors, as their priority in these kinds of situations is always the family. They will do their best to respect where people are while trying also to share the Good News of God as a way of providing care in times of grief.

When the bereaved integrate their faith in God and hope of an everlasting and eternal life into their thoughts and narrative, they feel peace and comfort, because this "promotes personal growth and regeneration, it provides pastoral comfort at times of pain or transition."¹⁷¹ For Esther, she felt only peace. "I think this was a peace that could only come from God. It wasn't that easy. I knew this wasn't natural, but I was very grateful. And I knew he wouldn't suffer any more." Her husband worked very hard for the family his entire life and he had a very strong faith, holding on to God especially when he was sick. She was able to find the blessing in his death, as he was able to rest with his Lord after a long, hard life. Yet, when she reflected on his funeral, she disagreed with how big it was. She says that, she had not thought about the funeral itself and it was her son at the helm of most of the decision making. Now that she has had time to think about what she would want, she has decided that she would want a simple service, rather than a whole ritual. She would just want

¹⁷¹ Graham, Walton, and Ward, 68.

one pastor with the family and maybe select friends, and some prayer. Esther had gone along with the kind of funeral that her son wanted when her husband died, but she did not feel the same way about herself. This is an example of what can sometimes be a challenge for immigrant families: the cultural differences within the families between the generations. A funeral that is well done witnesses to the God story but is also a way for the community and individuals to console the bereaved and to celebrate and honor the deceased. This is what the pastors have attempted to do through their relationships with the families and their ability to remain open and flexible when they are organizing the funeral ritual.

Culture in Families: Troubled Dynamics

The pastors acknowledge that funerals are not only marking the end of a person's life; sometimes, the death marks the end of the family as it had existed. Both pastors recognized that there are difficult family dynamics that could make the funeral a time of gathering for estranged families and it may be the last time the family will be together. Generational and cultural differences can be difficult on the family system, especially as Taiwanese American children are influenced by American society, where independence is valued over the family. This can mean there are conflicts in the family that people may not be prepared to share. Family is at the core of Confucian and Taiwanese society, as it is in Chinese society. Confucius taught that the family was at the center of people's lives and their duties to the family were more important than duty to any other entity, spiritual or human.¹⁷² This, argues Mary Yeo Carpenter, is akin to a cult of the family, where the family and one's obligation and responsibility to the family is more important than anything else in their lives.

¹⁷² Mary Yeo Carpenter, "Familism and Ancestor Veneration: A Look at Chinese Funeral Rites" in *Missiology: An International Review* 24(4), 505.

This means, however, that having a good family is of utmost importance and can define success for others. Like other cultures that is built on Confucianism, Taiwanese people uphold the family as the center of their relationships. Swanson observed that more than “one hundred terms are used to designate various family relationships” in Taiwan.¹⁷³ When one’s success is measured by the relationship within the family, it can be difficult for people to be willing to share about problems in the family, even though this might be more common than we would like to admit. It may not be a coincidence that both families who suffered losses during my study had complicated family dynamics, which were not revealed to the greater church community. However, as both pastors worked on their relationship with the families, both knew about the family issues and were present to the families to provide support. Further, knowing that Taiwanese people take their family relationships so seriously and knowing that the church has become their family in the United States, I can see how important the members are to each other, and the need for the whole church to provide pastoral care for each other.

Both pastors took extra care to make sure that the families were taken care of and they had what they needed to feel support; whether it was to help Mei’s family plan her memorial service at the church to honor her life without worrying about people wondering about the family dynamics or to completely hold a private service as Pastor James did for Ming and his family. There are aspects of Chinese culture that people subscribe to, which can sometimes be difficult to understand. Confucius’ teaching upholds the family above all other part of people’s lives. Pastor James recalled the trouble with flowers the first time he realized that there was meaning assigned to their location that he had never thought of in the past.

One time I was arranging the flowers wrong and I got yelled at. You can’t put this one here! And I said, why? There’s no explanation. Just, you can’t put this here. And then later, I realized that was the abandoned son’s. So he was going outside. The flowers say we miss the person and we love the flower, but we want it to be seen in the most visual section, which is right next to the

¹⁷³ Yeo Carpenter, 505.

coffin. And then the flowers represent how well known or how popular the person is. And then also the price of the flowers is crazy too. how big the flowers represent how wealthy the family are and then also, flowers represent a lot of things. And I thought: wow, I didn't know about this. Maybe it is for other communities too.

Navigating these unknowns can sometimes be a challenge. Sometimes, even pastors well-versed in both the Taiwanese and American cultures can miss the nuances of the family dynamics.

More than simply a way to express the role of particular people in the family, the funeral is a ritual and it is important to find a way to contextualize the funeral to be something that is meaningful to the family. This is something both pastors do very well, as they are able to utilize their pastoral training, experience, and skills to help create a worship service that is helpful to the family and sometimes to the church as well. Death itself is already difficult for the bereaved, but it can also complicate family dynamics and relationships. In both families who had lost loved ones recently, there were tensions in the family. This was not openly spoken about, yet both pastors were aware that the families were fractured. Pastor James said about the funeral that “this may be the first or last time [the family] will see each other, if it is a difficult family or maybe the first and last time. Maybe it is the beginning of the battles, their future dependents or whatever.” This means that part of the pastoral care they have to provide includes a sensitive approach to people’s relationship within their families and to be careful about how to provide that support.

In his experience, regardless of whether he is at a funeral or at wedding, he is always thinking about ways that he can honor the families and give them the most care. He spoke about the examples he had seen in the beginning of his ministry, where pastors tended to be present but then would leave immediately after the service. As time went on, he felt that it was not a good idea to leave.

I started hanging back to observe the family. I feel that leaving at the end is more stable. It is good to wait until the end when everyone else leaves. When you talk to them at that time, they will feel very calm. It's a good feeling. The end feels empty. I don't know if you feel this way, like if you go to a birthday party and after everyone leaves, you see the mess left behind and the dishes

left, you feel empty. The same thing, after the viewing, the families need something more. They need something to tell them this is the end. You don't want to leave them with an emptiness with the empty room. This is something I developed after I observed.

Care does not only exist during the difficult times in life, but in the good also. Pastor Peter was able to reflect on happy occasions, including birthdays, but also weddings, to provide better care in those moments of grief.

Pastor James was able to come up with a call to worship, scripture, and say a few words to make the space a bit more formal on the spot. This was important because liturgies can be comforting, “it’s like when people are very vulnerable, and they don’t know what to do and they’re very anxious—and you give them a liturgy to follow, then there’s order.” In this way, he used the liturgy to serve people, both the living and the dead. The living feel comforted by the words and songs and can remember the good times and find some closure. The dead are honored with the remembrance of their lives and the sharing of memories. Despite it being such a difficult time for Ming and his siblings, Pastor James’s leadership and presence, as well as the liturgy, helped ground the family and allowed them to let go of their troubles to just focus on the moment. No matter how the funeral is performed, it remains a ritual of ending and is a public ministry to those who grieve and is a form of pastoral care.¹⁷⁴ The funeral is a part of the grieving process that offers a way to ritualize remembering the deceased for the mourners. In his experience, Pastor James does not believe that Ming and his family are unique; therefore, he is always sensitive in his approach to his family, knowing that he should not assume anything about the families who come to him.

Mei’s family also struggled with some difficult family dynamics. However, unlike Ming’s family, Mei’s family wanted to have a more traditional funeral service. For this family, Pastor Peter took more of a leadership role and helped the family plan the viewing, the burial, and the memorial

¹⁷⁴ Mitchell and Anderson, 141-143.

service. He planned each part of the funeral carefully, helping to highlight the relationship of the deceased with those around her and as a witness of God's blessings. He had engaged the family with the liturgy and guided them through the parts, encouraging them to reflect on what he felt was significant and necessary. He thoughtfully arranged each part of the funeral service, including the viewing, the memorial service, and burial, understanding that in each part, he is speaking to different aspects of her relationship with others.

Even if some members of this family were estranged and were unfamiliar with the deceased's relationships in her life or her last days, they can learn more about Mei and her life, as the pastor and some other family members remember her. In this way, Pastor Peter is doing what Long and Lynch encourages: to help the funeral participants understand what it is to be human, to provide closure in this life, and to bear witness to faith.¹⁷⁵ He is very intentional about the liturgy that he creates, making sure that it is suitable for each family he encounters. Similarly, Pastor James' priority is on care, rather than evangelism. Even though the percentage of Taiwanese American Christians are at about 25%, according to Chen as stated, there are still many who are not believers. Because Taiwan Church is a local church, people seek out Taiwan Church for help during times of grief and difficulty. Thus, Pastor James tends to perform more funerals for non-Christians and non-members than for members. Because he does not always know the deceased, Pastor James does not assume anything but follows the lead of the families to try his best to provide care for the souls rather than to attempt to evangelize them in the moment of grief. "[E]very time you are facing different people, you have to adjust yourself. So today is mostly non-church goers, so you need to address that to their level in order to embrace them." This is a uniquely Taiwanese American challenge for these

¹⁷⁵ Thomas G. Long and Thomas Lynch, *The Good Funeral: Death, Grief, and the Community of Care* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), 195.

pastors, working in a community that is diverse in its spirituality and finding ways to care for them nonetheless.

For fellow Taiwanese American pastor and theologian, C.S. Song, it is important to keep in mind that our God is an open God who understands that human beings do not necessarily fit neatly into categories, including that of “Christian” vs “non-Christian.” Jesus, argued Song, ministered consistently and openly to all people, none of whom he categorized. Rather, Christ cared about the “cry and anguish of a neighbor’s troubled spirit.”¹⁷⁶ Pastor James focuses on build a trusting relationship with these families, to let them know that he prioritizes their care and emotions so that, should they ever want to learn more about Christianity, there is already a connection and a safe relationship they can call upon. It is important to keep in mind the religious diversity of Taiwanese Americans and be able to find ways to honor them and respect them while offering care and support to their families, whether they are Christian or not.

Implications of the Relationship

In many ways, Taiwanese American Christians hold some traditional Asian values: being stoic, private, independent, and unemotional. Additionally, they also exist within the context of diversity: some long-time Christians may feel their faith precludes them from requiring care and others may not be Christians at all but have come seeking a place to call home in a foreign land. Their context contributes to the challenges of providing pastoral care. Yet, every person in the church needs care even if they may simply not realize the need for it or identify that the relationship, they have built with their pastors constitutes as pastoral care. The challenge for the pastors is that of building an authentic relationship, which needs to be done intentionally and consistently, by allowing others to know who they are, not only as pastors, but as persons. It is only when a trusting

¹⁷⁶ Song, *Tell Us Our Names: Story Theology from an Asian Perspective* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1987), 16.

relationship exists that people feel comfortable enough to share what is truly on their hearts and minds, especially about a topic as sensitive as the family, especially if these relationships are vulnerable or broken. Both pastors have found authentic ways to push through the walls to offer care to families that need it.

By breaking through the barriers to the relationships and being able to establish trust and leadership with their members and understanding the culture of the churches in which they serve, the pastors are able to support families in the funerals through rituals and storytelling. They extend their connection with the family to the way they perform the funeral ritual. Both Pastors Peter and James are able to articulate the importance of each aspect of a service and how best to use the liturgy for comfort and to bring some peace to the grieving. The funeral provides an opportunity for pastoral caregivers to honor the relationship of the family, no matter how broken, and allows the pastors to perform a ritual that can bring closure to familial relationships, honoring the stories of the deceased and their relationship with their families, their friends, and their church and community. It allows for the pastors to share God's good news with their members, that death is not the end. God "promises that life and love triumph over death and that hope triumphs over despair."¹⁷⁷ Further, since the relationship has been built, there can be on-going care offered as needed, creating greater connection and bringing more support. It is also through these pastoral relationships that families become open to the church as a whole, one that offers support to them, which the pastors are able to balance through an understanding of the culture of the church. Each pastor calls upon the church in different ways to serve the people based on how the church culture operates. This is the way in which both pastors are able to exert their pastoral leadership for the church.

In the funeral service, the pastors weave together the story of the deceased to present to their loved ones a living and loving picture of the deceased. They guide the families through the

¹⁷⁷ Franklin, 16.

liturgy, presenting it in a personalized way that allows the participants of the funeral to hear stories of the person and to hear the greater narrative of God's story interwoven throughout. Rituals and stories bring about the possibility of reconciliation and have the power to heal.¹⁷⁸ Additionally, the personalization of the funeral rites and rituals can help people grieve and bring them comfort, not only to ease the pain of loss, but pain from the deeper wound that Taiwanese Americans carry with them. The way that pastoral care is performed allows people to truly be seen, not just during the funeral, but in the relationship that the pastors and the church have built up with its members. People do not attend church simply because it is a way to worship God; rather, they must be able to find themselves and their people in the churches that they attend, whether or not the church is local to them. In this way, not only does the person become a witness to their families, but to the church, and to God, and becomes a care-giver who brings wholeness to all those who participate. Our stories are connected to God's stories and personalizing the funeral makes us more connected to God's story and therefore makes it more, not less, theological.

¹⁷⁸ Anderson and Foley, 167.

Chapter Five

Practicing Pastoral Care

The findings of this dissertation show that to deliver effective pastoral care, pastors in Taiwanese American churches need to have insight into both themselves and their churches. What I found in this study is that offering pastoral care to Taiwanese American Christians can be a challenge. While people will seek out the pastor for a ritual event such as the funeral, the care that they are looking for tends to be more practical than emotional. The pastors that I interviewed lean on their experience and their tenacity to break through to people to demonstrate their willingness to be present. It is necessary, on top of individual relationship building, to look at how leadership works within the church and community through understanding the organizational culture of the church. This chapter will offer some recommendations for offering good pastoral care that emerged from my research.

Establishing Leadership within the Cultural Norm

Good pastoral care requires close attention to the church so that pastors can lead within the cultural norms of the church. Most human beings cannot live well on their own. Our social natures are programmed to live in communities. Human beings have always organized into communities and family groups to live and survive, in response to dangers and threats from animals and nature, among other factors. Leadership evolved to serve the needs of the group. As organizations continue to evolve, the founding members age and step aside for new leadership and new members to take their place. In the churches, leadership is challenging for pastors who are new to the congregation and are called to take leadership by the congregation that is made up primarily of those who are part of the existing culture. Change can often be difficult, but it is especially challenging to change an

existing culture because “it provides meaning and predictability.”¹⁷⁹ Merely by entering into the space, the arrival of a new leader in and of itself offers both the appeal and the threat of change. Both pastors who were part of this study have tried to work within the culture of the church and the group to build trust, helping people understand that they, as the outsider and leader, will not try to change or erode their core values or mission.

The culture and history of Taiwanese American Presbyterian churches help explain why it is not a coincidence that many of these churches in the United States offer their pastors contracts, for three years, rather than a call, which is both indefinite and required by the Presbytery. The history outlined in chapter two demonstrated that many Taiwanese American Presbyterian Churches, especially the early churches, were organically established through the gathering of people who had to take care of running the church on their own and were used to having a level of control they are reluctant to relinquish to a stranger. Pastor Peter acknowledges that “the pastor is a stranger. You have to build a relationship that is intimate and good, but that is hard.” When Pastor Peter came to Formosa Church, he was able to understand the need for the church to be in control and was able to include them in pastoral care but at the same time he had to be readily available and present to provide more than the lay leaders could.

On the other hand, Taiwan Church was a church established by a pastor, who chose Pastor James to take over for him when he retired. Pastor James was shown by the pastor what the traditions were and was taught what was expected of him. Further, the founding pastor had instructed the church to give Pastor James a call, which gave him job stability and showed the church that he was committed to being their leader. Yet, it still took him several years before he was able to build the level of trust with the members of the church that made them free to talk to him about what was on their hearts and minds. Pastor Peter had to figure out a lot of these cultural

¹⁷⁹ Schein, 14.

questions on his own, as he was brought in under somewhat temporary conditions, receiving only a three-year contract from Formosa Church. Good leadership may be believed to be innate, not learned, but both pastors demonstrated that through careful reflection, they are always learning, experiencing, and developing good leadership skills. Additionally, the way they see themselves and understand their call to ministry helps them to fit into these churches, perhaps in way they did not initially expect.

For both Pastors Peter and James, pastoral care requires not only an intentional, authentic, constant presence, but also an understanding of how the culture of the church and the families work. Both Pastors Peter and James worked within the cultures of their churches and in partnership with their leaders. This has helped them be successful in their ministries and gain acceptance. By understanding the culture of the church, they are very comfortable in their leadership roles. It is also clear that after a number of years of being leaders and building relationships with people in their respective churches, their churches look to them as leaders and have learned to trust their judgment. This was apparent in the way that the churches handled my request to conduct my study in their churches.

When I approached Pastor James to speak to him about my project, he did not just immediately agree to assist me, but also reassured me that the church will do as he asks of them, so I should not worry about whether the session would approve my project. Since I had received his permission to conduct my study in the church, his elders would not contest this. As soon as I made my request, he could tell me not only how many people met my criteria, but who would likely be able to help me. While Pastor Peter also agreed to assist me and welcomed me to observe Formosa Church, he did tell me that he would run the idea by the session. However, he did not think that it would be a problem for the session, since he felt that they would look to him for guidance on this matter. On the Sundays that I arrived at the church for the first time to conduct my research, both

pastors took the lead to introduce me to their congregations and explain my project on my behalf. While not all the members spoke with me about my project, many people were very friendly and introduced themselves to me, sat with me during lunch hour, and asked questions about my education and my work. If there were people who were concerned about my presence, nobody voiced their concern to me. Clearly, their churches trusted their pastors to guide them, even if it meant that their worship life and congregation might be observed under a microscope.

Images of Leaders

Pastors need to have insight into themselves and to root their pastoral practice in an image of pastoral care. They need to have a way of understanding their pastoral care and ministerial practices that is authentic to who they are and to their unique context. For example, neither Pastor Peter nor Peter James explained to me how they saw themselves as pastors nor used images to describe their pastoral care. However, I can see that they identify strongly with certain images of pastoral caregivers. Being able to fit the pastors into certain images helped me to gain insight into how the pastors see their pastoral ministry and better clarified for me how they fit into the culture of the churches in which they work.

The most classic image in the Bible is of Jesus as the shepherd, the one who leads and protects the sheep. The shepherd knows each and every sheep and offers to each one protection and guidance, tending to their every need and keeping them together. The shepherd tends to the herd as a whole but has to pay attention so that even if only one sheep is lost, the shepherd will leave the other ninety-nine, giving all his energy and attention to the one lost sheep.¹⁸⁰ The hope of the shepherd is to guide the care seeker in a healing direction, offering oneself to the benefit of the lost sheep. However, the sheep are not expected to care for one another. While both pastors do see their

¹⁸⁰ Parable of the Lost Sheep can be found in Luke 15:3-7 and Matthew 18:12-13.

roles as one of guiding and teaching, as well as caring, this image does not fit with how both pastors engage their congregations and lift them up to become leaders in their own right to support one another. In many ways, this pastoral image is an insufficient way of describing the ministries of the pastors.

Pastor Peter fits the image of the wounded healer as used by Henri Nouwen, a pastoral theologian and Catholic priest. The wounded healer image, unlike the image of the good shepherd, does not ask for the leader to be perfect, whole, or all-knowing in order to excel at what they do. Rather, Nouwen argued that it is precisely because we are wounded as human beings that we can heal, both ourselves and others; it is from our vulnerabilities that we can connect with others and from our connections we accept our flaws to see the image of God within us. During our interview, Pastor Peter shared the story of his own fears when he was in a violent earthquake in Taiwan as an example of needing to be ready for God. He further uses his life as an opportunity to share this truth with his congregation. During the time of my study, he shared his own loss with the congregation during Sunday worship. He had shared that his brother-in-law, who was not only family, but a beloved mentor and a dear friend, had suddenly died of a heart attack the day before and used his loss as a source of faith and hope. These events allow people a window into himself as a person; moreover, it allows them to understand that flaws and fears are not negatives to banish but are qualities and emotions to engage with and process. Pastor Peter also shared his loss with the congregation, announcing this death during the time of announcements and asked for prayers, setting an example for others who might covet prayers but might be afraid to ask for them. He is not afraid to use his own vulnerability of fear and loss to share wisdom and pain with others and in so doing, bring connection and comfort to others.

Additionally, for Nouwen, woundedness stems from loneliness, which is at the heart of human suffering. Loneliness is a word that can express a human being's immediate experience from

which to understand brokenness. It is the job of the pastoral caregiver to join others in their shared loneliness to connect and provide hospitality, which “allows us to break through the narrowness of our own fears and to open our houses to the stranger, with the intuition that salvation comes to us in the form of a tired traveler.”¹⁸¹ Pastor Peter recognizes this loneliness and isolation in his congregants and makes it a priority to establish relationships with them in such a way that gently pushes them to open up their hearts and homes to him. For example, he was able to use his pastoral authority to push past people’s emotional walls and establish regular visits with Mei’s family. While Mei’s family was initially hesitant about regular visits, after a while, they let their guard down and welcomed his visits and his care for them.

Pastor James is what theologian Jeanne Stevenson Moessner would describe as a self-differentiated Samaritan. She criticized the classical Biblical image of the shepherd where the care is only in one direction: the cared for. The caregiver, the pastor and family, is asked to sacrifice themselves for others. Yet, Pastor James offers himself with a strong boundary, knowing that he deserves to have his sabbath to relax and get away from the life of the church. He also holds a line for his wife, encouraging her to participate where she would like rather than making her feel forced to be a secondary pastor. In the shepherd imagery, the responsibility of the care is solely placed upon the shepherd, whereas Stevenson Moessner sought an image that includes the interconnectedness of healing as well as the importance of self-care. What she noticed in the parable of the Good Samaritan was that the Good Samaritan was able to give care to the injured, but at the same time went on to finish his journey. The Samaritan was able to provide for the injured even as he provided for himself by calling on the community for assistance, demonstrating a healthy love of one’s neighbor, but also of himself.

¹⁸¹ Henri Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society* (New York: Image Books Doubleday, 1990), 81.

Likewise, Pastor James allows for the congregation to take the lead when it is needed. For example, there is Sunday School every other week. However, he is not the only person who leads the Sunday School sessions. Other members, who are willing able, also teach the class. Moreover, on one of the days when I went to interview him during the week, a chaplain was there, teaching her Bible Study class, which takes place every week. Pastor James said that the chaplain had come to him asking whether he needed help with his Bible Study and volunteered to help him if he did not mind. He thought it would be beneficial for the participants if they could get a different perspective from her and agreed for her to teach the class. In this way, Pastor James is both able to draw his boundaries but also to be an effective leader at the same time.

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is a type of leadership strategy that allows the pastors to be who they are while honoring the members of the church, both lay leaders and the congregation. This form of leadership encourages everyone to work closely with each other in mutual service. Jesus, the Son of God, was the leader of the church. Yet, Jesus was also a servant of the church, as described by the Scriptures. Rather than enjoying the position of God, the Son of God turned away from being God to take on human form. Christ came as a servant for humanity and was obedient even unto His death.¹⁸² From the beginning, not only did Jesus' existence provide salvation for God's people, but also demonstrated service. Shortly before Jesus' death, Jesus washed and dried the feet of his disciples, as a model of servant leadership. After He was done, Jesus said to his disciples to follow in this example, "So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one

¹⁸² Philippians 2:7-8 NRSV

who sent them.”¹⁸³ Pastors, then, as leaders of the church, are called to follow in this tradition of service as shepherds rather than kings. Through the existence and sacrifice of Christ, the church’s mission is to treat all people as equals and to love them as Christ has taught them to do and stand with people as Christ had done. The church’s service is not to be *above* people but to be *with* them.

The key to servant leadership is that it starts from the self. Rather than looking outward at what others should or need to do, the servant leader looks within to see where his or her own improvements can come. This honoring of one’s vulnerability and humility is present as the leader first serves the needs of others rather than reinforces the leader’s own powers. This is a collaborative model of leadership emphasizing equality; the leader is not inherently better than anyone else. The servant leader first ensures that needs are met before attempting to move forward. The “role of the leader, to a great extent, is *value* based. And the *main* value is that the leader is not simply someone who is in it for the recognition, but someone who works to create the social architecture that benefits the cartography of the people for whom that organization is responsible.”¹⁸⁴ This means that the servant leader is looking for a greater good, especially through developing relationships. Because the relationship is built first, there will be mutual service between the leaders and the followers. The servant leader works to ensure that a community is built within the organization so that each person can feel invested and empowered, thereby becoming willing to take on more responsibility, not only for themselves but also for the work that is produced. The involvement of the lay leaders and other community members by the pastors helps facilitate this growth in the community.

Neither pastor spends a lot of time trying to think about or describe the work they do in academic terms. However, what they are doing in practice is the work of practical theology and

¹⁸³ John 13:1-17, NRSV.

¹⁸⁴ W. Bennis, *Why Leaders Can’t Lead* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2004), xiii.

intercultural pastoral care. They spend time reflecting on the care that they provide, being very intentional about how they connect with people and working hard to build relationships both during times of crisis and peace. They recognize each person as an individual, but within the context of their families and their communities. What they are doing is work that requires time and intentionality that might not be possible if they were not serving the church full time; this care may not be possible in a church without a pastor and perhaps it cannot be appreciated. Pastoral care seems to be something that people do not know that they need, until they receive it. People are not necessarily unappreciative, but, like Esther and Paul, it is something that comes from God rather than their fellow Christians or their pastors.

The goal of the pastors, like the goal of servant leadership is not to simply achieve success, but to benefit everyone in some way through influencing individual growth and building and investing in the community. Above all things, people are honored. These strategies will allow the church to return to its original mission: to be a servant of God's people. The challenge for the Taiwanese American church is to be able to open hearts and minds and be a safe space where people can share their vulnerabilities. The care has to be intentional and continuous, authentic and individual, and both God-centered and people-centered. This is the challenge of the work of ministry and the call of practical theology and pastoral care. When it is available, people appreciate it and benefit from it tremendously.

Practical Theology: The Action-Reflection-Action Model

By following the above recommendations, one would naturally engage in practical theology and utilize the action-reflection-action model. This is a model that can strengthen any pastoral ministry. Whether or not they realize they are doing it, both Pastors Peter and James use the practical theological method of the action-reflection model. Whatever ministry of pastoral care they engage in, they reflect on what they have done to improve upon that ministry. As a result, they are

always growing and moving toward God and, at the same time, bringing people closer to God. The work of practical theology is to define the way by which a faith community can preserve its integrity even as the society around it changes. The goal of practical theology, then, is to guide the life of the church. This serious thought includes reviewing, evaluating, and ordering activities of the faithful that will move the church “toward the fulfillment of its Christian calling.”¹⁸⁵ When Christians reflect on their life of faith, theology is happening. The practical part of this term means that it is concerned with “actions, issues, and events that are of human significance in the contemporary world.”¹⁸⁶ Practical theology seeks to address those concerns, using critical reflection and interpretation. This work is “performed by those who thoughtfully seek to embody deep convictions about life and its ultimate meaning in the midst of ordinary and extraordinary circumstances.”¹⁸⁷ Its mission is to seek religious knowledge in the “service of a larger *telos* (end or aim) of enriching the life of faith in the world.”¹⁸⁸ This means that theology is not limited only to those capable of a sophisticated theoretical theology. Rather, every person of faith has the intellectual ability to engage in the forming and practice of theology.

This is the work that both pastors are doing and are pushing their congregations to do. Both pastors understand that by engaging the congregation in the care of each other, people can reflect upon the practice of faith in their lives and integrate these meaningful practices into their daily lives. It is for people who want to serve the broken world in which they live in a manner congruent with their faith, but not limited to religious professionals. They can use their experiences, both personal and social, to reflect on the meaning of God’s presence in their lives and how they can find a more

¹⁸⁵ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Christian Caring: Selections from Practical Theology*. James O. Duke and Howard Stone, Eds. Trans. by James O. Duke. (Cambridge: Academic Renewal Press, 2002), 22.

¹⁸⁶ James Woodward and Stephen Pattison, eds. *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 7.

¹⁸⁷ Bonnie Miller-McLemore, "Practical Theology," in *Encyclopedia of Religion in America*, ed. Charles Lippy and Peter Williams (Congressional Quarterly Press, forthcoming.), 3.

¹⁸⁸ Miller-McLemore, 4.

faithful response to the divine presence. It challenges people to think about the impact of their faith on not only themselves but on their communities as well. Both Pastors Peter and James engage the congregation during worship, reminding them to pray for those who need further support. They alert leaders and members in their churches to the plight of others so that they can all take action to provide pastoral care. In my interviews of Esther and Peter, both have reflected extensively on their relationships and what has happened, and both have come to the conclusion that they are able to witness to their faith and to the presence of God. They have also commented on the support and care provided by the members in their congregation. Care is not merely a time and opportunity to speak about and witness to God and faith but can become involved in things such as bringing food and singing songs. What matters is the presence of people who are willing to remain in the time of sadness with each other.

Faith is meant to be living and transformative. Pastor James, in his homework assignments, actively encourages his congregation to engage with the Scripture and the sermons to relate to their daily lives. He encourages reflection that leads to a deepening of their faith, realistic applications of their faith, and the space to reach out for additional support. Because of this encouragement, people are better able to understand that Pastor James not only cares about them but can be a supportive presence in their lives with their challenges. Change comes from a commitment to serious, critical reflection and the pursuit of new knowledge and this is the change that Pastor James has noticed. While Pastor Peter does not engage his members in this same way, he does encourage leadership to participate and be models for the rest of the congregation. Although they never used the term “practical theology” to describe the pastoral care and theologies that they practice, they are practical theologians. Practical theology helps us better articulate, learn, and challenge our experiences and what the impact of our faith has on us to transform our own lives, and, if we are lucky, the lives of

those around us as well by encouraging the use of interdisciplinary research methods to offer new interpretations to see the world more clearly.

Final Lessons

It can be difficult for anyone to share their flaws with others, including their negative and overwhelming emotions. For Taiwanese people, their tradition and cultural values make it even harder to ask for help and guidance, because they do not like to share their vulnerabilities with outsiders. Their strong faith and the innate understanding that life on earth is not the end can serve to block their strong emotions around death, which may prevent them from being able to talk about their loss. Especially for Taiwanese Americans, who are so well-educated and who have made a choice to leave Taiwan, the pressure to succeed on one's own and the need to save face in front of their community is strong. They may not feel comfortable sharing that they have stressful family dynamics, which can add dimensions to their grieving. However, by being intentional and consistent with engaging with their members through being their authentic selves and, when appropriate, sharing their own vulnerabilities, pastors are able to slowly build trust and connect with people.

Furthermore, by being able to see and understand the organizational culture of the church and to recognize the roles that members play within the church, pastors can fit in better within the church to further establish trust and be more successful in offering pastoral care. To Taiwanese Americans, the church is more than just a place of worship; it is a home where they find their new families and establish a new home in the United States. This means that they are emotionally connected and invested in their church and do not mind traveling a great distance to meet their families on a weekly basis. Pastors who serve these churches need to better understand how these churches function and the role of lay leadership in these churches so that they can work in tandem and not in isolation from or against what is already in place, acknowledging and honoring the

traditions that have been established and those who have come before. Thus, to offer good pastoral care, one needs a good understanding of the context and culture of the churches, including its history and how it was established, whether it is an affinity or a community church, and what roles are played by the pastors and lay leadership. By understanding the organizational culture of the church, pastors can then play to the strengths of the church and encourage participation in a way that feels natural and organic to them to bring about pastoral care to people.

It is through the connections that pastors make with the church and with its people that pastors can become integrated into the church and with its members. Though they might enter into the church as an outsider, they can slowly become a member of the family who can provide trusted leadership and care. These connections need to be formed in order for the people to trust their pastor with their sacred stories. It is through the hearing of people's stories that pastors are able to address their needs properly and adequately. To truly guide families in their time of grief to create a meaningful funeral service that honors the deceased, comforts the family, and witnesses to God's greater story, pastors need to be aware of all these factors. Moreover, by having insight into who they are authentically as people, bringing in their life and ministerial experience, and knowing how their strengths can fit with the organizational culture and context of the church in which they work, the pastors are better able to engage the lay leadership and congregation to work together to provide a successful pastoral care ministry that involves service with and to the whole church.

One future direction stemming from this research is self-care for pastors. Because of the role pastors take on in their churches, it can be for them a lonely existence, which can lead to isolation and burn out. If the Taiwanese American Church is more than a worship space for members and is instead a family, it stands to reason that the pastors, as people, would have this same need from the church. Yet, because of their position and role, it is possible that these pastors would not be able to take advantage of the community and family the church offers. Further questions that derive from

this understanding might include how can pastors navigate this situation, how might pastors take care of themselves, and are they able to find a community for themselves, especially for pastors who are immigrants themselves. Self-care cannot be far from pastoral care and may be an important topic to be further explored, especially for those pastors who are first generation Taiwanese Americans, who share similar cultural struggles as their members who purposely seek out Taiwanese American churches for the family and community relationship.

At the end of my research and analysis, I have found that there are historical and experiential reasons behind the way churches, individuals, and pastors have done things. I am reminded that, if good pastoral care is being given, it is always important to understand people holistically instead of making judgments in the moment. Some of this might be experiential and instinctual, but the tools and insights of organizational culture can provide a strategic way of understanding churches and its members that allow a smoother transition and leadership of pastors in their churches. It was striking to me how hard the pastors worked when it comes to pastoral care and how much of this work was invisible. This is a privilege that, as a hospital chaplain, I do not have with the population I serve. This privilege provides an opportunity for congregational ministers to offer a deeper, more meaningful pastoral care for people that can ultimately be life-changing. These pastors are not simply going to work and becoming close to the people who they meet in church. Instead, they are aware that relationship building is what allows them to break through barriers to offer care and is therefore an essential part of their call. Because of this, the relationships they pursue and engage in are intentional and purposeful, which leads to a more fulfilling ministry that can make significant meaning in people's lives.

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APPENDIX A:

Interview questions for adult family members who actively participated with the church to plan the funeral and adult members of the church

Demographic questionnaire:

1. Age
2. Gender
3. How long have you been a part of the church?
4. How often do you attend church?
5. Are you involved in any groups in the church?
6. Do you attend anything other than worship on Sundays?

Interview questions for the families who have lost loved ones:

1. Can you tell me about your loss and who the person was to you?
2. Can you tell me about what happened?
3. How were you able to deal with what happened and make plans for the funerals?
When the church helped you plan the funeral, how helpful to you were they?
 - Logistically
 - Emotionally
 - Spiritually
 - How did you feel during the funeral planning process?

Can you tell me about the funeral and how you felt that day?

What stood out to you during the funeral?

Who from the church attended the funeral?

What did you feel was the best and worst part of the funeral?

How did you feel after the funeral was over?

APPENDIX B:
Interview questions for pastor

Demographic questionnaire for the pastor and lay leadership in charge of pastoral care:

Age

Gender

How long have you been a part of the church?

How long have you served in your current position?

What made you accept your current role?

Interview questions for the pastor and the lay leadership in charge of pastoral care:

1. What do you think a funeral is or should be?
2. What kind of liturgy or materials do you use to prepare for the funeral?
 - a. What do you hope that you can accomplish during this time?
 - b. Do you have a goal for the funeral and what is it?
3. What is the most important or some important components in a funeral?
4. Do you think the funeral can be a form of pastoral care?
5. What do you think pastoral care is during the funeral?
6. What do you think pastoral care is?
7. What do you think is most important aspect of care is?

APPENDIX C
Consent forms

To Pastor [Name] and the Session of the [Name of the Church],

My name is San Yi Lin and I am a doctoral student at the Claremont School of Theology. I would like to invite you to participate in a research study, entitled “Investigating Pastoral Care in the Taiwanese Immigrant Church.” The study is being supervised by Dr. K. Samuel Lee of Claremont School of Theology, 1325 N. College Ave; Claremont, CA 91711. Dr. Lee can be reached at (909) xxx-xxxx or slee@cst.edu. You are free to contact me at Pasadena, CA 91106 or call me at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

The purpose of this research study is to examine how pastoral care is provided and received in the funeral process. Your participation in the study will contribute to a better understanding of pastoral caregiving especially at a time of bereavement. You will help better understand what happens in a funeral and how funerals might be a tool of providing pastoral care. I am excited to see how you are providing spiritual care to your congregation and if you have any questions or concerns about my project, I am happy to hear them.

I will only approach people who are over the age of 18. Anyone I interview can withdraw at any time. They can also decline to answer any questions they feel uncomfortable answering. There will be no compensation for participating in my student; it is entirely voluntary. I would like to speak with the pastor and also anyone who is on a care committee responsible to give pastoral care to those going through death and dying. Finally, I hope you can help me find two families that have suffered a recent death in the family so I can talk to them about their experience to get a fuller understanding of the care that is given and received.

This may be a difficult conversation for the people who choose to participate to have because giving care to grieving people during deaths is always challenging. It can be difficult also for those who are receiving the care. I do want to assure you that I will be very sensitive to the emotions of the room and the stories and I will allow people to share as much or as little as they are comfortable. Furthermore, all information will be kept confidential and anonymous, so people do not have to be identified. There will be no identifying information that will mark this church as one that is being studied. I hope that this opportunity gives you some time and space to intentionally reflect on the work that you are already provide.

By signing this letter, the session is formally agreeing for your church to participate in my research. This means that the pastor and the lay leaders in charge of pastoral care will agree to be interviewed and be willing to fill out the questionnaire. It will also mean that the session will help me in identifying families that may meet my criteria who I will approach about participating in my study.

Thank you for your consideration,

San Yi Lin
Pasadena, CA 91106
xxx-xxx-xxxx

Informed Consent to Participate in Research

Identification of Investigator and Purpose of Study

You are invited to participate in a research study, entitled “Investigating Pastoral Care in the Taiwanese Immigrant Church.” The study is being conducted by San Yi Lin under the supervision of Dr. K. Samuel Lee of Claremont School of Theology, 1325 N. College Ave; Claremont, CA 91711. Dr. Lee can be reached at (909) xxx-xxxx or slee@cst.edu.

The purpose of this research study is to examine how pastoral care is provided and received in the funeral process that you have recently experienced. Your participation in the study will contribute to a better understanding of pastoral caregiving especially at a time of bereavement. You will help better understand what happens in a funeral and how funerals might be a tool of providing pastoral care by answering questions about your experience with the funeral and how the church helped you in the process. You are free to contact the investigator using the information below to discuss the study.

San Yi Lin
Pasadena, CA 91106
xxx-xxx-xxxx
san-yi.lin@cst.edu

You must be at least 18 years old to participate.

If you agree to participate:

- The interview consists of approximately one visit of about an hour. Follow up interviews may be requested if deemed necessary.
- I will ask for you to show me any tokens or items you have saved from the funeral.
- You will not be compensated.
- You can withdraw at any time and drop out of the study.

Risks/Benefits/Confidentiality of Data

There are no more than minimal risks associated with this study, though these discussions may be very sensitive for you. This may be a difficult conversation for you to have because it is asking you to remember a sad and potentially stressful time in your life. You may ask me to stop at any time. We could continue, or we could stop completely. You do not have to remain in the study if you feel uncomfortable. However, if you agree with participate, I promise I will listen carefully and honor your story. Sometimes it can also be helpful to process a difficult time in your life through telling the story of what happened. It is my hope that you can find some peace as you share your story. I do have grief resources, such as griefnet.com, where you can find general information about grief and support groups, but I will also provide you with a list of local support groups near you if you are interested in attending and processing your grief further.

Your name, email address and other personally identifiable information will be kept during the data collection phase, but I will be the only one with access to this. No personally identifiable information will be publicly released. When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity. Your information will be stored on my computer until I complete my research. Once I have successfully defended my dissertation, I will take no longer than seven days to delete all files with your information on it.

Participation or Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to answer any question and you have the right to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal will not affect your relationship with Claremont School of Theology in any way.

Contacts

If you have any questions about the study or need to update your email address contact the primary investigator San Yi Lin at xxx-xxx-xxxx or send an email to san-yi.lin@cst.edu. This study has been reviewed by Claremont School of Theology Institutional Review Board and the study number is 2018-0101.

Questions about your rights as a research participant.

If you have questions about your rights or are dissatisfied at any time with any part of this study, you can contact, anonymously if you wish, Dr. K. Samuel Lee of Claremont School of Theology, 1325 N. College Ave; Claremont, CA 91711. Dr. Lee can be reached at (909) xxx-xxxx or slee@cst.edu. Thank you.

• SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I have read the information provided above. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Address

Phone

Email

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

My signature as witness certifies that the participant signed this consent form in my presence as his/her voluntary act and deed.

Name of Witness

Signature of Witness

Date (same as participant's)

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

Signature of Investigator

Date (same as participant's)

A copy of this document will be supplied for your records.

Informed Consent to Participate in Research

Identification of Investigator and Purpose of Study

You are invited to participate in a research study, entitled “Investigating Pastoral Care in the Taiwanese Immigrant Church.” The study is being conducted by San Yi Lin under the supervision of Dr. K. Samuel Lee of Claremont School of Theology, 1325 N. College Ave; Claremont, CA 91711. Dr. Lee can be reached at (909) xxx-xxxx or slee@cst.edu.

The purpose of this research study is to examine how pastoral care is provided and received in the funeral process. Your participation in the study will contribute to a better understanding of pastoral caregiving and funerals. As Taiwanese living in the United States, how you provide care may be different than how other churches in the United States give care because of the specific needs of Taiwanese people. By speaking with me, you can help articulate the unique of our community and what kinds of cultural sensitive and specific needs Taiwanese Americans might have. This project will also help me better understand how, as leadership in the church, you provide care and arrange and perform the funeral. You are free to contact the investigator using the information below to discuss the study.

San Yi Lin
Pasadena, CA 91106
xxx-xxx-xxxx
san-yi.lin@cst.edu

You must be at least 18 years old to participate.

If you agree to participate:

- The interview consists of approximately one visit of about an hour. Follow up interviews may be requested if deemed necessary.
- I will ask for you to show me any tokens or items you utilize in funerals, including the liturgy.
- You will not be compensated.
- You can withdraw at any time and drop out of the study.

Risks/Benefits/Confidentiality of Data

There are no more than minimal risks associated with this study, though these discussions may be very sensitive for you. This may be a difficult conversation for you to have because giving care to grieving people during deaths is always challenging. Additionally, helping plan an event can be difficult. I hope that this opportunity gives you some time and space to intentionally reflect on the work that you are already providing and, in doing so, perhaps help you feel better about your work.

Your name, email address and other personally identifiable information will be kept during the data collection phase, but I will be the only one with access to this. No personally identifiable information will be publicly released. When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity. Your information will be stored on my computer until I complete my research. Once I have successfully defended my dissertation, I will take no longer than seven days to delete all files with your information on it.

Participation or Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to answer any question and you have the right to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal will not affect your relationship with Claremont School of Theology in any way.

Contacts

If you have any questions about the study or need to update your email address contact the primary investigator San Yi Lin at xxx-xxx-xxxx or send an email to san-yi.lin@cst.edu. This study has been reviewed by Claremont School of Theology Institutional Review Board and the study number is # 2018-0101.

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Thank you.

• SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I have read the information provided above. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant *Date*

Address

Phone *Email*

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

My signature as witness certifies that the participant signed this consent form in my presence as his/her voluntary act and deed.

Name of Witness

Signature of Witness

Date (same as participant's)

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

Signature of Investigator

Date (same as participant's)